

Financial crisis looms as interest rates start to rise

Mrs Thatcher and her Cabinet are steeling themselves for a series of unpopular decisions in an attempt to bring the money supply under control. An expected rise in

the Bank of England's Minimum Lending Rate was anticipated yesterday by the National Westminster Bank, which increased its base rate to 15½ per cent.

Unpopular decisions ahead

By David Blake
Economics Editor

The Government came face to face with its first financial crisis yesterday as National Westminster announced an increase in its base rate of interest to 15½ per cent.

The one and a half point jump in the interest rate is expected to be followed by the other main clearing banks within a few days, and a rise in the Bank of England's minimum lending rate, possibly of two percentage points, is expected on Thursday as part of a package of measures to bring the country's money supply under tighter control.

The increase will push up the cost of bank loans and will put pressure on building societies to raise mortgage rates.

Figures to be given on Thursday are expected to show that the amount of money in the economy has been growing far more rapidly than the 7 to 11 per cent range set by the Government's targets for monetary growth.

Government ministers are steeling themselves for a series of unpopular decisions over the coming months in an effort to bring the money supply under control. Raising interest rates is the first of these, but it will almost certainly be followed by a tough attitude to both public spending and taxation policy in the months leading up to the Budget.

Both Mrs Thatcher, the Prime Minister, and Mr David Howell, Secretary of State for Energy, tried to impress their message that Britain will have to run "a tight ship" in the coming years. The Prime Minister told the House of Commons that all economic goals must come second to containing the money supply and the control of public spending.

She argued that other problems such as high interest rates, continuing inflation and unemployment would be sorted

out if the Government could achieve these objectives. The latest Treasury forecast, which is expected to be published next Tuesday, is that the economy will grow by 2½ per cent this year, on all these points.

A warning of the severe limitations which the Government believes to exist came from Mr Howell at a meeting of Conservative businessmen in the House of Commons. He gave a warning that the test for Western economies in the coming years was not whether they achieved growth, but "whether societies like ours can retain previous levels of well-being and security or fall back".

The Government recognises that the short-term outlook for both production and growth is extremely grim, and will be made worse by the decisions on Thursday affecting interest rates.

But the Government is determined to stand firm at what it clearly feels is its first major test. Despite her dislike of high interest rates, the Prime Minister seems to have been persuaded of the need to increase MLR, which sets the structure for all interest rates in the economy.

She is also reconciled to the inevitability of an increase in the interest rate charged by building societies for house mortgages. The cost of overdrafts will also rise, with interest rates probably reaching between 19 and 21 per cent for most borrowers.

The crisis which is forcing this action sprang from the Government's almost unanimous support of a sharper than expected increase in the amount of bank lending in the

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Miners reject 'final pay offer' of 20%

By Paul Routledge
Labour Editor

Miners' leaders last night sent shockwaves of apprehension through the political scene by rejecting outright the National Coal Board's "final offer" of 20 per cent pay increase this winter.

Breakdown in what had seemed to be steady progress towards a peaceful settlement on pit pay came after the board put an extra £45m on the table to usher in the £100-plus-a-week peak winter.

The offer was rejected unanimously, and it was the moderates who led the revolt. Mr Sidney Vincent, the Lancashire miners' secretary, moved the resolution.

Mr Joseph Gormley, president of the National Union of Mineworkers, said after the talks: "I am disappointed that we broke down. I hope we can get a settlement before the end of the year because there seems to be an incomes policy brewing. If you read behind the lines, that is what Mrs Thatcher has said."

The NUM executive has been called to an emergency meeting next Wednesday to plan the next move. That move could be further negotiations—difficult in view of the NCB's insistence that the offer is their last word on pay—or a pithead ballot. By conference decision the moderates are in the coalfields. As the negotiating committee which yesterday rejected the offer constitutes a majority of the executive, it is extremely unlikely that the decision will be reversed.

The coal board offered 20 per

Mr Howell's doubts
Mrs Thatcher attacks
Parliamentary report
Record levels on the way

October. This is likely to lead to a sharp increase, possibly as much as 2 per cent, in the money supply figures to be published on Thursday, which will show that M3, the underlying rate of growth of sterling, is considerably higher than the 11 per cent top limit set by the Government.

The excess growth in money supply is caused in part by unexpected buoyancy in all kinds of private borrowing as the recession which is expected next year takes effect more slowly than expected.

The increase in official rates expected on Thursday makes that recession more certain and will make it deeper, which should lead to a cut in borrowing. But the Government is also clearly determined to hold down the amount which it itself borrows, and a feeling is growing in government circles that, in the long run, too much weight should not be placed on interest rates alone as a means of holding down money supply.

It will also be necessary to cut down the Government's deficit, it is felt, which will mean either higher taxes or further cuts in public spending. Ministers are finalising their review of spending plans for the years after 1981, and the latest problem in the money market is likely to strengthen the hands of those Treasury Ministers who feel that a decision to hold public spending next year to its current level was not tough enough.

It is possible that the cash limits system for controlling expenditure could be called upon to impose a further constraint on the overall volume of spending. In its actions on this and other economic issues in the coming weeks, the Government is likely to be guided by a concern to be seen to be putting the fight against inflation ahead of all other priorities.

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HOME NEWS

Mr Healey
faces the
Iron Maiden
treatment

By Hugh Noyes
Parliamentary Correspondent
London

Mrs Margaret Thatcher bared her teeth at Mr Denis Healey in the Commons yesterday as she pounded home her message that all other economic partnerships must come second to the containment of the money supply and a reduction of public expenditure.

High interest and mortgage rates, continuing inflation, high unemployment, balance of payments problems—all would fall to the iron maiden treatment. The Government had sorted out the priorities so far as the former Labour administration. That was the burden of the Prime Minister's "iron" doctrine, as she came under heavy attack from both wings of the Labour Party.

Mr Healey, in complete command of the situation, has been the target of her searing gaze as an interrogator with a withering gaze.

It was Mr Healey who came in for the full iron maiden treatment. The former Chancellor rose menacingly to remind the Prime Minister that she had once told the Commons that 16 per cent interest rates would impose an intolerable burden on home-buyers and small businesses.

Or on Thursday, he predicted,

the would have the highest

unemployment rates and the highest

inflation rates in Britain this

year.

But Mrs Thatcher threw out

another candidate for the

Guinness Book of Records. The

former Chancellor, she pointed

out, still held the record for

the highest inflation rate

Parliamentary report, page 5

Growth 'is no longer yardstick for economic success'

By Fred Emery
Political Editor

In a grim little speech yesterday admitting that economic "success" no longer meant growth but simply holding on to present living standards, Mr David Howell, Secretary of State for Energy, added his voice to the strengthening Cabinet warning of storms ahead.

However, a counter-warning to the Government that over-reliance on monetarist policies could wreck the economy and still fail to end inflation came in a remarkable speech by Mr Peter Tappell, until last year a member of Mrs Margaret Thatcher's frontbench team on treasury policies.

But where Mr Tappell wanted imagination from Government rather than resignation, Mr Howell warned no more delusion.

Success in the next few years for the western economies, including ours, "we told luncheon meeting of Conservative business leaders in the Commons, will be measured not by high growth rates and high living standards."

The test will be whether societies like ours can remain present levels of wellbeing and security or fall back. That will be the yardstick.

As oil prices lurch on up,

as disorganization amongst oil producers spreads and inflation in the Middle East of sharply cutting oil production, the need for Britain to run a "tight ship" increases all the time.

But for Britain even to be

comes a steady friend amid the

huge adjustments facing all in-

ustrial countries three great

illusions had to be shed.

He called for an effort to

establish bilateral talks be-

tween the OECD and Opec, with

"a leading statesman not in

office" appointed to get some

sanity into oil pricing.

No checks for MPs on defence committee

By George Clark
Political Correspondent

MPs appointed to the new departmental select committee which will examine the working of the Ministry of Defence will not be vetted for security.

That was made clear in government quarters yesterday, as a spokesman for several Conservative MPs that information about top secret defence plans would be withheld from the committee unless they were vetted. Labour MPs said this should be a breach of parliamentary privilege.

The argument was unnecessary. It was pointed out that the Defence and External Affairs Sub-committee of the Public Expenditure Committee, which examined defence policy and spending under the old select committee system, for many years received classified information and questioned civil servants and others on secret matters.

Evidence was heard in private; the selections of the committee's reports dealing with secret information were "defined" and withheld from publication, although they were circulated to ministers.

Mr Winston Churchill, Conservative MP for Stratford and a vice-chairman of the Conservative Party's Defence Committee, said: "This committee replaces a subcommittee which produced unanimous reports.

Stage set for hours cuts, union leaders told

By Paul Routledge and Donald Macintyre

Trade union leaders will be told today that more than 1,840,000 workers have won a cut in hours and "the stage is set for a significant reduction in working time both in the United Kingdom and Europe."

The disclosure is in a confidential background paper to the TUC Economic Committee giving first details of the unions' campaign to introduce a 35-hour working week throughout industry and commerce.

The paper reports on developments in Europe, and makes some comparisons with the United Kingdom, where only 15 per cent of male manual workers have basic hours of 39 or less, and only 2 per cent work for 35 hours or less.

The shorter working week was a key issue in the recent

Whitehall's technology in test case

By Donald Macintyre
Labour Reporter

The Government has warned Civil Service union leaders that it may abandon one of its most advanced computer projects failing agreement to a related staff cut by the end of the month.

The dispute over Capital (Computer Assisted Placings in the Areas of London), an award-winning E11m system that would transform the way of London employment offices has become a cause for the introduction of new technology in Whitehall departments.

Capital is intended to give officials in job centres immediate access through VDU's (visual display units) to information about vacancies and registered unemployed people throughout London.

The Manpower Services Commission (MSC) says the system, which has been successfully piloted at 15 offices in north-west London, will improve service while economizing on staff time.

Civil Service unions, which are also resisting two electronic systems designed for the Department of Health and Social Security, Data Link and Computerization of Local Office Tasks, are seeking a national agreement that technological change will not result in any job losses.

Camelot would enable local offices to assess immediately a claimant's supplementary benefit rating.

The unions have rejected MSC demands for a cut in 220 posts and are insisting that the project be used to expand the public sector share of the job finding market.

Terminals installed throughout the country have yet to be connected. The Civil and Public Services Association and the Civil and Public Servants, who are opposing their introduction pending a general agreement on new technology.

County ends nurseries

By Our Labour Reporter

More than 1,500 children aged three or four attend county nursery classes and schools at an average cost of £25 a pupil a year. The closure will begin in 1981 and will be phased over three years, with an estimated £44,000. Thirty-seven teachers and 60 other staff will be made redundant.

Mr Justice Mars-Jones said that Mr Bohan, aged 39, of Kezia Street, Deptford, and Mr Galbraith, aged 30, of Weston Estate, Lambeth, both London, had been rightly convicted of affray. He said they were both close friends of the man killed.

As Miss Vicki Hodge, a model and friend of Mr Bohan, left the court weeping she was attacked by an elderly woman, who punched her in the face.

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As Miss Vicki Hodge, a model and friend of Mr Bohan, left the court weeping she was attacked by an elderly woman, who punched her in the face.

He said that the removal of immunity from legal action could lead to many court actions and awards of damages, which would cause serious difficulties for the unions and for the country.

Mr Murray's action by about 25,000 members of the Civil and Public Services Association against the Department of Employment, later this month, in the expectation that a Bill will be published on the proposed changes in the first two weeks of December.

The Department of Employment said yesterday the purpose of the planned changes is "union membership agreements with employers".

Bargaining or Battleground (published by TUC, Great Russell Street, London WC1, 5p).

industrial disputes are rarely awarded at present. Under the new proposals that should be different.

Our Political Correspondent writes: Mr Murray, told 50 members of the Labour Party trade union group at the House of Commons last night that Mr Prior's legal advisers believed that the Government's proposed trade union legislation would enable both suppliers of goods and retail customers to sue their unions when affected by a strike.

He said that the removal of immunity from legal action could lead to many court actions and awards of damages, which would cause serious difficulties for the unions and for the country.

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Leaders approve paper outlining aims for Labour inquiry

Move by unions to reassert their authority

By Paul Routledge
Labour Editor

Trade union leaders have outlined their political future in a policy paper that is likely to dominate the work of the Labour Party's commission of inquiry.

Trade Unions for Labour Victory (TULV), which brings together leaders of all the big party-affiliated unions, has approved a position paper in the light of pressures for increased democracy and accountability.

The position paper has much to say about the staffing of the inquiry, and argues that the unions should either supply staff or pay for extra staff needed to carry out the commission's work.

A substantial decline in individual membership, and the level of activism of members within their communities, has led to a major campaign organisation in many localities, and in some constituencies the party has virtually ceased to operate.

But the paper concludes that there is a need to review the whole structure of the party in Parliament. The commission might also suggest providing trade union services on a commercial basis to the Labour Party.

Turning to the constitutional issues at stake, the TULV paper says that there will be an investigation of union affiliations to local parties and the possibility of factory branches. The general management committee should be re-examined.

At national level, the unions admit there will be an analysis of the structure of representation at Labour Party conferences—including the trade union general secretaries.

Constituency secretaries would no doubt require independent briefing.

But if, says TULV, it is simply

a Labour Party internal investigation with union money to offset problems at a time when trade union political funds are reaching the limits of what they can do for the party.

The paper concludes that the

unions have still to feel

the question of the block vote.

"This will obviously involve

consideration of issues discus-

sed at conference. The benefit

of the block vote is that it

provides a balance between constituency

and national leaderships.

At the same time, the

leadership would no doubt

require a firm grip on the com-

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ME NEWS

Jade union war likely Mr Mason's ally faces a call to resign

By Ronald Kershaw

Trade union war is on the
brink breaking out in the
constituency of Mr
Mason, who was Northern
Secretary in the last
government.

It is the drive for
unity in the constituency
Party by local miners
union left-wing delege-

tes organized by Mr
Scargill, Yorkshire
president. The Barnes
have made no secret
intention to oust Mr
Mason in the reselection pro-

cess of his moderate

Trevor Lindley, Mr
Mason's parliamentary agent,
right declared, however,
"the power struggle was
over". He said:

"A reselection at the
workers' takeover bid has
been agreed. Trade union
at various levels and it
is though a trade union
imminent."

Lindley said unions repre-
sent technicians, shop
electricians and
ers were looking to their
and to their
in the constituency
Party.

In addition other unions
to Barnes. Trades
were becoming dis-
satisfied with the council's
leadership, and were
mining their local
role and raising up seats
the constituency Labour

left's attempt to gain
a resolution for the reselection
of Mr Mason admitted that
the commission at present looked
left-wing weighted but he said
there were many sections of the
Labour movement with an
aversion to control by groups.

Abuse of widespread bonuses criticized

By Christopher Warman

Government Correspondent

centive bonus schemes
strongly criticized by Mr
Kinnear, Chief Inspector
of Audit, in his report for
1979 published yesterday.

It states: "Many local
authorities have little
than a complicate and
detrimental local authorities'
control over an im-
portant part of their budget."

The report was the subject
question in the House of
Commons to Mr Tom King,
Minister of State for Local
Government, who said it
had "apparent growth
and weaknesses" in
schemes. He urged
to study the report, saying
value for money and effi-
ciency had never been more
important.

It is estimated that more
than two hundred and fifty
full-time council
workers out of a total of two
million are covered by bonus
schemes, including most
workers in the building, en-
gineering and electrical trades
and 72 per cent of other male
council workers.

The report states that bonus
schemes are by their nature
subject to error, miscalculation,
manipulation and mismanage-
ment. It identifies a number of
strengths and weaknesses in the

constituency party meeting,
which they then attended in
force to swing left-wing voting.

Mr Fisher is tough to face

the constituency party's execu-
tives, which expects him to
resign.

If he refuses, the matter will
be raised at a management
meeting of the party next
month.

Mr Mason has been an NUM-
sponsored MP for nearly 27
years, but a fact that has
escaped the attention of most
Barnsley miners is that miners'
MPs are now sponsored by the
national organization of the
union, and the possibility of any
new miners' candidate will have
to have the blessing of the
union's national executive.

Another force to be reckoned
with is that not all miners'
branches are at one with Mr
Scargill's views. Mr Lindley
said that at least two branches
opposed Mr Scargill's moves,
and many retired miners who
still retained voting rights.

Mr Mason has so far kept a
low profile in the power battle
and the reselection issue,
largely no doubt because Mr
Scargill has not yet attacked
him personally.

Mr Mason broke his silence

last night to say that it would
be wrong to take an axe and
dried the method, that only
the application of reselection

"What, for instance, should only
a constituency party manage-
ment committee be involved?"

He asked: "Why should not every indi-
vidual member of the Labour
Party in a constituency be con-
sulted at a secret ballot?" This
might be thought a more demo-
cratic method of reselection and
it is no doubt being considered by
the commission of inquiry into
Labour Party affairs."

Mr Mason admitted that the
commission at present looked
left-wing weighted but he said
there were many sections of the
Labour movement with an
aversion to control by groups.

Mr Scargill had called a
meeting of miners' dele-

ges to Barnes. Trades
were becoming dis-
satisfied with the council's
leadership, and were
mining their local
role and raising up seats
the constituency Labour

left's attempt to gain
a resolution for the reselection
of Mr Mason admitted that
the commission at present looked
left-wing weighted but he said
there were many sections of the
Labour movement with an
aversion to control by groups.

£2m pictures acquired by gallery

By Geraldine Norman

The National Gallery yester-
day announced their most im-
portant acquisition of the year,
three panel paintings by the
late-Renaissance artist, Jacopo
Pontormo, worth together about
£2m.

The three paintings depict
scenes from the life of Joseph
and have been on loan to the
National Gallery since 1970. The
gallery has not disclosed the

identity of the vendor but the
paintings were acquired in
Florence in the late eighteenth
century by Lord Cowper.

They were in the family col-
lection at Panshanger, Hertford-
shire, and it is believed that
they were inherited by Mrs
Rosemary Mosley, nee Salmon,

Sir Oswald Mosley's erstwhile
wife-in-law.

Christie's, the auctioneering
firm, negotiated the sale to the
National Gallery. A significant
tax advantage was the reason
for the private vendor's sale,
as opposed to a auction, a spokesman commented yesterday. The
price had been in "seven
figures" he said.

The three panels are among
14 that have survived from the
decorative scheme com-
missioned in 1515 by Salvi
Borgherini, the banker, for the
bedroom of his son, Pierfrancesco,
who was about to get
married. He panels by various
leading Florentine artists, dec-
orated the bed and clothes chest,
and all depicted scenes from
Joseph's life.

The National Gallery now
have six of the series; they
are also owned by Bacchus
and one by Pontormo.

Mr Michael Levy, director
of the gallery, said yesterday
that the four Pontormo panels
in the National Gallery, as far
as he knew were the only works
by the artist in a British public
collection, would give the pub-
lic an opportunity to appreci-
ate fully this very great but
very rare artist.

By Ian Bradley

A Scottish teachers' associa-
tion has called for criminal
records to be searched before
teachers are registered as
being fit for employment.

Mr Robert McClement, gen-
eral secretary of the Scottish
Schoolteachers' Association

said in a letter sent yesterday
to the Scottish Education

Department that the General
Teaching Council for Scotland
is giving facilities for a search
of police records to see if
there are convictions for
sexual crime or crimes involving
dishonesty.

Last week a teacher from
Rothsay, Bute, was sentenced
to six years' imprisonment
after being found guilty of 23
charges of lewd and libidinous
behaviour, with children aged
between eight and twelve. The
teacher had been convicted and
imprisoned for sexual
offences with children in 1946.

Mr McClement's letter also
asks the Secretary of State for
Scotland to ensure that "no
person is admitted to a course
at a college of education or
in association with the General
Teaching Council for Scotland,
without being asked to give
details of any conviction for
sexual crime or offences implying
dishonesty".

Mr Alexander Fletcher,
Under-Secretary at the Scottish
Office with responsibility for
education, told the Commons
on Monday that procedures for
registering and employing
teachers in Scotland were

experiment, in the forming of
a Mini car or a door handle,
were not treated by critics and
historians with the same stand-
ard of intellectual respect that
was regularly given to the sil-
lent art gallery antics.

The history of industrial
design was unwritten and its
records were thrown away.

"Nobody challenges the
importance of great viewing
Renaissance, Turner, Hol-
bein, but one would like a
few more forays on the pla-
teau of supermarket and con-
venience depots, where there is plenty

of opportunity to sink for ever."

The system of state patronage
of the arts worked well in
Britain, although "the staple
dinner of the artist is the hand of
those who feed him".

By Robin Young
Consumer Affairs Correspondent

Criticizing the artist's retreat
from reason into contem-
porary narcissism", Sir Hugh
expressed despair at so many
creative minds turning archi-
tecture into a "two-dimen-
sional spectator sport" while
city centres were crying out
for imaginative rebirth.

While he saw some grounds
for optimism, Sir Hugh, giving

the Romanes Lecture in the
 Sheldonian Theatre, Oxford, was
worried by many aspects of
the relationship between the
artist and designer and society
in general.

"The gap between fine art-
ists and the public has seldom
been wider", he said, arguing
that art seemed to have
vanished from the street and
from people's lives into the
museum or studio, in which it
was guarded by ferocious
watchdogs or protective ac-
tivists.

In the case of some auth-
orities workers can earn different
rates of bonus for the same
work.

It is common practice for
refugees to complete their
working week in 25 to 30 hours,
for which they receive basic pay for
the full working week.

The true earnings of the
workers for the hours they
actually work represent basic
pay one and a half times the
nationally agreed hourly rate
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nationally agreed hourly rate
plus a bonus of 50 per cent of
that hourly rate."

The report says that the
escalation of bonus earnings
has removed much relevance
from the annual round of
national negotiations of basic

Home Office supervision for cable TV

The Home Office is to retain
responsibility for supervising
the development of cable tele-
vision, Mr William Whitelaw,
the Home Secretary, said yes-
terday.

Under proposals framed by
his predecessor, Mr Merlin
Rees, responsibility for that
and other minor broadcasting
services would have been trans-
ferred to the Independent
Broadcasting Authority. There
was no reflection, Mr Whitelaw
said, on the IBA's licensing
function was more appropriate
carried out by the Govern-
ment because it was not a func-
tion of the IBA, set up to
supervise television and local
sound broadcasting services.

Mr Whitelaw said that at the
time he had a large measure
agreed with the proposals,
which in particular would have
meant relieving the Home
Office, among other things, of
its responsibility for the pro-
gramme content of those

various services.

In contrast, German silver did
not apparently command as
large a premium as expected.

An Augsburg soup tureen,
cover, stand and ladle by A. F.
Staerke, made from 1747-48,
cost 35,000 francs (estimate
25,000-35,000 francs) or £3,945,
plus 2 per cent un-
sold.

Christie's sale of English
drawings and watercolours made

£42,633, with 8 per cent un-
sold.

Record total at Sotheby's Swiss sale of old silver

By Our Sale Room
Correspondent

Sotheby's yesterday held the
most financially rewarding
Zurich sale of antique silver since
they started auctions in
Switzerland.

The top prices were for Eng-
lish silver, with an octagonal
milk jug of 1715 by Simon
Pantin (415 grams) at 60,000
Swiss francs (estimate 25,000-
35,000 francs) or £17,045. A
teapot of 1725, again octagonal,
and with a squat pear-shaped
body (575 grams), by William
Spackman, made 58,000 Swiss
francs (estimate 20,000-25,000

francs) or £18,474.

An ornate coffee pot of
1724 by Thomas Teale (930
grams) made 52,000 francs
(estimate 25,000-35,000 francs)
or £14,772. All three pieces
went to the same anonymous
English buyer.

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By Ian Bradley

came to cook for the Meal of
the Year Man Competition

judges, who found honeydew
melon macerated in yoghurt
wrapped in lightly-cooked
green bacon and deep-fried in
batter "a hesitant start", and
curry "flavour in the soup
overdominant".

The organisers of the event,
the publishers of the magazine,
Caterer and Hotelkeeper, pro-
fessed themselves well pleased

with the enthusiasm which
had shown for the event and
with the care the competitors
had taken with their entries.

They are equally incensed
that the designs and the special
folding, wrapping and envelope-
making machines were sup-
plied by a British company,

Longford Business Equipment.

By Robin Young
Consumer Affairs Correspondent

their local authority in private
or voluntary homes, they are
assessed on the notional income
of any capital assets they have
above £1,200.

"Local authorities have no
power to compel a resident to
sell his property to meet the
assessed charge", the report
points out. "They can suggest
that a charge be placed on the
property, or that the local
council agrees to recover the accrued
balance of charges from the
resident's estate."

The report says it seems in-
equitable that such arrangements
should depend on voluntary
agreement, and points out
that the cumulative national loss
of income from unpaid charges
pending the sale of the former
family home is about £4.5m. It
recommends that consideration
should be given to the creation
of a statutory charge on a resi-
dent's property.

Old people entering private
or voluntary homes may have
to sell their homes to pay the
charges. But if they are in
council homes, or sponsored by

their local authority in private
or voluntary homes, they are
assessed on the notional income
of any capital assets they have
above £1,200.

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council agrees to recover the accrued
balance of charges from the
resident's estate."

The report also estimates that
councils lose about £50,000 a
year because people do not

pay the charges.

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PARLIAMENT, November 13, 1979

Heavy responsibility on those who block elections in Rhodesia

House of Lords

If the Government has taken positive steps to review sanctions under Section Two of the 1965 Southern Rhodesia Act it would have been not only a sensible and proper act but an extraordinary way to acknowledge progress and continue the policy of the former Secretary of State, Sir Peter Thorneycroft, and Commonwealth Affairs, said when he moved the second reading of the Southern Rhodesia Bill. It would enable the Government to take steps which would lead towards the goal of legal independence for Rhodesia with a constitution which is guaranteed a genuine majority rule.

The Bill completed its passage through the Commons early yesterday.

Lord Carrington said Rhodesia had not been progressing on the problems which were the legacy of Empire. Even the legal procedures necessary to bring Rhodesia into the family of nations were different.

The Bill, he said, would require a separate Act of Parliament.

The purpose of the Bill (the continuation) is to grant the Government powers to review and, if necessary, to amend the existing sanctions.

He said he hoped the warning note struck by Lord Carrington did not indicate a state of despair and anxiety among the people of Rhodesia should continue to be subject to sanctions; and that they should not be given an opportunity to proceed.

Lord Patten (Lab), Leader of the Opposition, moved an amendment regarding the future of the Government to retain Section 2 of the Southern Rhodesia Act 1965 during the period of transition.

He said he hoped the warning note struck by Lord Carrington did not indicate a state of despair and anxiety among the people of Rhodesia should continue to be subject to sanctions; and that they should not be given an opportunity to proceed.

There was now a conditional agreement on the continuation and agreement on certain important principles concerning the longer period.

The need to move on to discussion of the continuation of the existing sanctions was pressing. In these circumstances, the Government must be in a position to implement an agreement without delay and must have the power under the Bill to follow it through.

The Bill (the said) should give both sides at the conference confidence in the Government's determination to implement an agreement as soon as possible, which will immediately be followed by all the people of Rhodesia. If agreement is reached, momentum must be sustained to the progress towards independence.

The Bill would give the British Government sufficient powers to respond to the situation in Rhodesia in effect under Section 2 of the 1965 Act should there be unforeseen developments sufficiently as he believed them to be.

The bulk of the sanctions affect the direct trade with Rhodesia. The United Kingdom and Rhodesia's exchange controls would remain in force under other legislation for the time being.

Positive action would be needed before these sanctions could be lifted and new action would be taken when the time came to negotiate with the arrival of a British governor and acceptance of his authority.

The proposals the Government had laid before the conference represented what it believed to be fair and just. It would justly reward those who had accepted the terms of the settlement.

Lord Milford (Con) said the hurried raising of sanctions must raise suspicions throughout Africa that Britain's intentions were a military alliance with Rhodesia.

The immediate settlement of force, the police and the army, while an election was going on.

Lord Hailsham (Lab) said this was the last chance of an agreement as soon as possible.

Lord Stewart of Fulham (Lab) said the Patriotic Front had reason on their side when they expressed indignation about both the front and the actual organisation.

The immediate settlement of force, the police and the army, while an election was going on.

Lord Hailsham (Lab) said this was the last chance of an agreement as soon as possible.

Lord Gwynne-Roberts, Opposition spokesman on foreign and Commonwealth affairs, said he was profoundly disappointed at the progress of the negotiations.

He said the progress of the negotiations had been slow and the position taken by the Patriotic Front.

That was a fundamental misconception of the nature of the negotiations.

The fundamental cause of the negotiations was to achieve a constitutional settlement which was genuine.

The question at issue now was who was to exercise power after independence?

The position of the Government was that the new government would be a government which had been chosen by the people of Rhodesia in fair elections under British authority.

There is an urgent need for an end to political uncertainty in Rhodesia. We believe that the only way to achieve this is to have a government which has been chosen by the people of Rhodesia in fair elections under British authority.

The Government would go to Rhodesia as soon as a ceasefire was signed. Naturally, an agreement must be reached to establish a monitoring force to help reassess all parties that observance of the ceasefire would be impartially assessed and controlled. That would be a distinct advantage in organising their campaign and influencing the Rhodesian electorate.

Lord Soames, Lord President of the Council, said the United Nations would be told by the Government that Britain continued to promote direct trade with Rhodesia.

Lord Soames said that at the moment, but the progress made at Lancaster House had been such that they could now clearly see the prospect within a short time of a return to legality.

It was far more difficult to say what would happen in the short term. He anticipated the spoken word that it was to come in the written word.

The minimum he was seeking was that not only should there be no cuts in the external services of the BBC, but that the cost was 543.5m. The Government should look again at its priorities and embark on an expansion programme considerably larger than anything hitherto contemplated.

He believed that the Government had proposed that the saving of £100m should be made by an enhanced capital programme of the BBC aimed at improving audit.

We shall have in the next few years, he said, the profound effect of the BBC's programme on all over the world in vernacular languages in the certain knowledge that in many important areas it will scarcely be heard. The Government's new motto for the BBC is apparently that it must now claim to be providing both more and less at the same time.

When the Bill was considered in committee an Opposition amendment was tabled to amend Article 2(2)(b) of the Bill (the said) to read:

"That the Government should have the power to establish a monitoring force to help reassess all parties that observance of the ceasefire would be impartially assessed and controlled. That would be a distinct advantage in organising their campaign and influencing the Rhodesian electorate."

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The external services were one of the shrinking number of Britain's areas of defence and like defence and foreign affairs, they had been strengthened and not weakened.

An agreement between Foreign Office ministers and EEC members had been finalised in Brussels.

The agreement was rejected by 233 votes to 79 Government majority, 154 and the Bill was read a second time.

It would not be an improvement which could find favour in conflict with the parties.

A heavy responsibility (he said) will lie on any party which refuses to submit its claims to this test and

House adjourned, 10.23 pm.

Compromise on Rights of independents

European Parliament

Concern over the rights of non-aligned members and over the actions they were taking in the European Parliament led to a vote in the House on proposed changes to the Parliament's rules of procedure.

Although the Committee on the Rules of Procedure and Petitions, whose report Parliament was considering, recommended that members not affiliated to political groups should be included in a group of their own, non-aligned members were represented in the group.

After a long adjournment for talks between the committee and political groups and non-aligned members, Mr. Alan Nerd (The Netherlands, L) the committee chairman announced that the committee had voted to accept the report.

The report was welcomed by the non-aligned members who withdrew their many amendments.

The way to make the European Parliament more efficient was to have one centre for its meetings and not to have three centres in Strasbourg, Mr. John Marshall (London, North, ED) said during question time. He was speaking during exchanges about the cost of the meetings in three centres—Brussels, Luxembourg and Strasbourg.

Mr. Alan Clywd (Mid and West Wales, SC) had moved the Committee on the Rules of Procedure and Petitions to accept the report.

Mr. Christopher Tugendhat, commissioner for the budget, replied: The Commission is not in a position to say what the savings might be for other institutions. For the meetings in Brussels would produce an estimated saving of about £100,000 of the cost of accounting.

The possible savings resulting from the allocation of all the Commissions services in Brussels are difficult to calculate with any precision. It is by no means evident that an overall saving would result from the cost of the centralisation of the Commissions services in one centre and the cost of telecommunications would have to be set against the increased cost resulting from the need for new premises.

Mr. Tugendhat—Mr. Clywd is less than fair with me over my answer.

It is not the cost to the Commissions members states which are able to choose the centre they reach. It is up to the Commissions and other institutions to abide by Article 216.

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It is not the cost to the Commissions members states which are able to choose the centre they reach. It is up to the Commissions and other institutions to abide by Article 216.

I realize there is a great deal of human wear and tear involved in the travelling and the more disrupt-

'We cannot go on spending money which Nation does not earn'

House of Commons

Mrs Margaret Thatcher, the Prime Minister, said during heated exchanges with Mr Denis Healey, the former Chancellor of the Exchequer, that the Government was embarking on a sustained programme trying to get down public expenditure, a programme of national income and that this was the right programme for Britain.

Mr. Thatcher had told Mr Norman Atkinson (Harrow, Twickenham, Lab) that she would next chair the National Economic Development Council on January 9.

Mr. Atkinson—Would she consider reducing the hostility which the members of the Conservative party took to the conference?

With agreement already reached on a genuine majority rule, and the members of the Conservative party taking a more positive view of the conference, the answer is to reduce public

to pay as much as 10 per cent more than their continental counterparts for fixed interest loans.

It is not time for Mrs Thatcher to say to the country that they are no longer going down this road, she said, but to say that the right way forward is to borrow money at interest rates equal to those on the continent and thereby avoid the slump facing all of us?

Mr. Thatcher (Barnet, Finchley, C)—There are many, many countries in this country which like to assume in the course of time that their tendency to spend money they have not got. (Conservative cheer.)

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spending as a proportion of national income.

Mr. Nigel Forman (Sutton, Carshalton, C)—Will Mrs Thatcher be in a position to report to the NEDC on Government progress with its plans for a more wide ranging and self-reliant industrial programme?

Mr. Thatcher—I hope the consultation will take place on the basis of the NEDC's work.

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interest rates would have reached up and inflation rates would have been even higher than those we have now.

If we are to get interest rates down, we must get public expenditure down as a proportion of national income.

Mr. Atkinson—Is she saying that next year public spending will be a lower percentage of gross domestic product than this year?

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Sticking to rules on jobless benefit

Government intends to enforce more strictly the rules covering the right of the Government to retain Section 2 of the 1965 Southern Rhodesia Act.

He said he hoped the warning note struck by Lord Carrington did not indicate a state of despair and anxiety among the people of Rhodesia should continue to be subject to sanctions; and that they should not be given an opportunity to proceed.

Lord Carrington said Rhodesia had not been progressing on the problems which were the legacy of Empire. Even the legal procedures necessary to bring Rhodesia into the family of nations were different.

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The need to move on to discussion of the continuation of the existing sanctions was pressing. In these circumstances, the Government must be in a position to implement an agreement without delay and must have the power under the Bill to follow it through.

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The need to move on

EST EUROPE

Ierr Strauss gives unqualified 'yes' in Nato proposal to base nuclear missiles in West GermanyBy Patricia Clough
in Nov 13

Mr Franz Josef Strauss, opposition candidate for the chancellorship, has come out in favour of the deployment of medium-range nuclear missiles on West German soil without the consent of the present Government.

In an interview with *The Times*, Herr Strauss said he was convinced that our security in 1980s would be dangerously attenuated if no counter force is established "in the Soviet SS20s and Backfire bombers.

Therefore with a heavy heart I just say 'yes' to the Nato's to produce and deploy Pershing 2 and Cruise missiles, mainly in West Germany," he said.

Herr Strauss, leader of the conservative Christian Social Party (CSU) and Bavarian Prime Minister, was elected by the position in July to challenge the popular Chancellor, Herr Kurt Schmidt, in next year's general election. He gave his interview as West Germany, tactically the key country in

Nato's missile plan, came under intense pressure from the munition block to resist it. Its rough stand is based partly on military and strategic considerations while wholly influenced by the present communist threats and encroachments, is tempered by its policy

of détente and good relations with its Eastern neighbours.

Herr Strauss rejected outright the Chancellor's condition that West Germany should not be the only non-nuclear country where missiles are stationed. Herr Schmidt wants Belgium, the Netherlands, and Italy—or some of them—as well as Britain, to have them, too.

"If you are convinced that a medicine will save your life, do you say 'I will take it only if my sister does too'?" he asked. What the other countries did was their own affair.

He criticized the West German Government for strongly urging the United States Congress to ratify the SALT 2 treaty limiting intercontinental missiles. SALT 2 is seen here as the essential basis from which to negotiate about medium-range missiles.

"It is not out of business—and this criticism is directed at the federal Chancellor—that to give force to my instructions to ratify SALT 2," he said. The treaty was "only marginally linked" with the present missile question.

President Brezhnev's offer to withdraw 20,000 men and 1,000 tanks from East Germany and his proposal to reduce the number of medium-range missiles if Nato gave up in plan was "step in the right direction, but wholly inadequate", Herr Strauss said.

Mr Brezhnev's words were really aimed at the heart of the Social Democratic Party to

Allies hear Mr Pym strongly endorse new American weapons for EuropeBy Henry Stanhope
Paris Correspondent
in Paris, Nov 13

Mr Francis Pym, Britain's Defence Secretary, urged Nato allies today to endorse the United States' plan to "deter" its long-range clear weapons in Europe, for making more concessions to the Russians on arms control.

But the Dutch Government, whose attitude is a key factor in the argument, still has misgivings which the allies must overcome before a decision can be taken at next month's Nato meetings in Brussels.

Mr Pym was speaking as a reference of Nato's Nuclear Planning Group where 11 finance ministers are discussing the American plan to station 108 Pershing 2 missiles and 45 ground-launched Cruise missiles in Europe.

His strong endorsement of the American package was welcome to Mr Harold Wilson, the British Defence Secretary, who had told the allies earlier "it was important to take a robust and definitive" line.

The Pershing 2 missiles will all be stationed in West Germany under the American plan. But the Cruise missiles could be scattered around, 95 in Britain, 112 in Italy, 48 in Holland, 48 in Belgium. Mr Pym said in his speech that there were strong arguments in favour of deploying the missiles, particularly in view of the recent improvements in Soviet nuclear weapons.

The Dutch, according to their Defence Minister, Mr Willem Scholten, who gave a press conference here tonight, are still insisting that Nato should give priority to arms control before deploying new nuclear missiles in Europe.

All the Nato countries are agreed that arms control proposals should accompany the nuclear modernization package. But as Mr Pym made clear today they would like the modernization to come first so that they can negotiate from strength.

The Dutch said today that the Americans should ready the strategic arms limitation treaty, due to come before the next summit, before deploying the new missiles.

Britain has been one of the strongest supporters of the American package, and has even agreed to take more Cruise missiles than was originally intended, because West Germany found that it did not have room for its whole quota.

An American Air Force team has in fact just finished a preliminary survey of possible bases in Britain.

Two or perhaps three existing United States Air Force bases are the likely locations. Leuchars, Suffolk and Upper Heyford, Oxfordshire, are among the most favoured because they already have nuclear storage facilities. But the American standby base at Scunthorpe, Norfolk, is a third possibility.

Parliamentary report, page 5

Political unreality causes malaise in FranceFrom Charles Hargrove
Paris, Nov 13

by the French to justify their restrictions on imports of British lamb, which have been imposed in defiance of a ruling by the European Court of Justice. The European Commission has given the French until next Saturday to remove these restrictions or face further court action.

After a private meeting this morning with M. Pierre Maheiserie, the French Agriculture Minister, Mr Walker said he was convinced the French "were anxious to be come legal very quickly".

Mr Walker told his colleagues that as French farmers were only too keen for more free trade to help them out of their difficult financial difficulties, support for them should be nationally funded.

British officials estimate that a Community-wide cash payments scheme for sheep farmers would cost up to £100m a year, of which about £80m would go to Britain, which has the most sheep farmers in the EEC. "This would obviously be ludicrous", Mr Walker commented, "but if people want to hand me a cheque I will not refuse it."

He merely quoted the Gospel, "let the dead bury the dead", and appointed to M. Boulin's post a left-wing Gaullist and specialist of social affairs, M. Jean Mattois.

In a word, France has been spared the kind of violent, style conflict longed for by disgruntled left-wingers, and experienced with a mixture of apprehension and glee in the charmed circles of Paris drawing rooms, parliamentarian lobbies, and the press as a relief from the *ennui* which arises from the combination of unresolved human problems and the absence of high political drama.

A presidential spokesman said last week: "The Government has not proven unworthy. It is working. And if there were elections now, the majority would win them again"—a fact which relatively observable fully confirm.

He said that the unidentified flying objects were also seen by a Spanish Air Force pilot who was sent up to check on his report, and were detected as well by Spain's early-warning radar network.

The 109 passengers on Captain Tejada's Caravelle jet said that they had seen nothing. The objects, they said, were a hoax.

By his censors to be entirely above board if not altogether judicious politically; and M. Boulin's personal problems—

are merely yet another manifestation of the periodical carmine of French political society, an essentially Parisian phenomenon. It did not affect the less volatile grass roots.

"Deep France" was shocked by M. Boulin's suicide and all the political mud that was flung about in the wake of it. It could not understand why a man who was probably independent but not dishonest, had taken his life.

French society, with all its imperfections and inadequacies, that the opposition seems even more powerless to correct than the Government majority. It is more vindictive than it was a year ago.

The Government of M. Barre continues to grapple with mounting economic problems with unspectacular persistence.

President Giscard d'Estaing has not made the kind of solemn declaration that political prophets expected him to make, and the conviction that they are all more or less corrupt.

The relative restraint of the Gaullists' counter-attack, to accusations that they had "leaked" details of the Boulin affair to the press to embarrass the Government; the extraordinary objective complicity of the Communists with the Gaullists in denouncing the right-wing of the press; and even the Socialists' desire to abstain from making any public statement on the scandal, have paradoxically confirmed this ordinary Frenchman's hunch, that all parties have large skeletons in their cupboards.

So M. Giscard d'Estaing is right. There is no "crisis of the regime in a France of scandals". If Gaullists and Giscardists are as divided as ever, the Communists and Socialists are even more so.

But there is undoubtedly a political malaise.

This French malaise springs from a certain unreality, or artificiality of French political life, which has been heightened by the concentration of power in the presidency since the Fifth Republic, a process carried further than ever before

by M. Giscard d'Estaing.

The kidnappers had beaten up his emissaries and had torn up, burnt and returned in ashes to the kidnappers to start collecting a £3m ransom.

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OVERSEAS

Former Prime Minister of Iran waits expectantly in Paris for fall of the Khomeini regime

From THE TIMES

Paris, Nov 13

The occupation of the United States Embassy in Tehran will hasten the fall of the Ayatollah Khomeini, Mr Shahrooz Bakhsh, the former Iranian Prime Minister, forecast, in Paris today.

In an interview with The Times, he said: "I am an optimist, because I think Mr Khomeini will disappear very soon. But I am not an optimist, as far as the present condition of my country. By that I mean that Iran suffers much more today than it did a year ago."

Mr Bakhsh, who made Paris his base since he fled from Iran shortly after the Ayatollah arrived back in the country last February, now lives in an apartment in a modern block at Neuilly and divides his time between there and an office he has taken on the Boulevard Raspail on the Left Bank. Each day he meets a dozen or so Iranians who have fled their country to come and pledge him their support.

Organising an opposition in exile to the Khomeini regime is difficult and expensive. But he claims to be costing his supporters a lot less than the Ayatollah was costing his, when he too was in exile in France a year ago.

Two French policemen with machine guns over their arm stand in the lobby of the apartment block trying to look inconspicuous as policemen with machine guns can look in a block of flats. When asked if he is worried about assassination, Mr Bakhsh replied: "That's just part of the job".

For the moment, however, he believes that the Ayatollah is his best ally. "Khomeini helps us very much because he is directly mad and that helps us

in the sense we have to do. Iran was plunging deeper and deeper into chaos, he said, and that would go on accelerating the longer the Ayatollah remained in power. The communists were sufficiently

interested to profit from the chaos and he estimated that in three months' time they might

be in a position to seize power. "I say that the danger of becoming communists grows with the present regime, which is a chaotic regime. In chaos the methods of communism grow."

Did that mean that Iran would inevitably become a communist state if the Ayatollah were to remain in power for another six months? "Yes, it would be just not possible," he said. "Law of basic economics were coming into force. The communists stopped producing, so prices were soaring. An explosion is inevitable, even without the blunders of Khomeini like the occupation of the American Embassy."

Mr Bakhsh said that taking the diplomats as hostages had at last forced the Americans to release that the Ayatollah was not a bastion against communism, as they had seriously believed only a month ago.

He was sure that the United States would break its relations with Iran and so would the rest of the world, including the Islamic countries, which would be shamed by their association with a regime which had offended a deeply-established international law and practice. The Ayatollah was whipping up the revolutionary fever because he had nothing to offer in its place.

"Many people have demonstrated for me in Iran, despite the dangers and despite the fact that all the

Khomeneists have a gun in their hand and can gun down anybody. Naturally there have been no big demonstrations, but people do things like write slogans saying 'Bakhsh, come home'. If they get caught it means death."

Mr Bakhsh, a middle class Iranian, joined the French Army to fight against Nazi Germany in 1940 and he made frequent allusions to Hitler when he spoke. "There is a big similarity between Hitler and Khomeini," he said. "There is one big difference though. Hitler was at least well enough educated to read a map, but Khomeini does not even know where Russia is."

His bitterness arises from the

fact that having fought for 25 years against the Shah, suffering imprisonment and torture

as a consequence, he was given

power only to be ousted after 40 days by another form of dictatorship—perhaps a worse one."

After the fall of the Ayatollah, Mr Bakhsh believed a strong team would be needed to work together for two or three years to put the country on its feet again. He clearly thought that he could and should serve in such a team.

He was sure he could work with anyone even Marxists provided they were not manipulated by an outside country. There could, however, be no return to rule by the Shah.

As for the Shah, he thought it was inadmissible to think of extraditing a sick man to stand trial, and even if he were not sick, there was no point in putting him on trial. History will judge whether or not he has served Iran well. It will not be Khomeini. It will not be you and it will not be me. He must stand and be judged by the planning of demonstrations during the visit.

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OVERSEAS

North India faces mass famine as politicians fight electoral battles instead of drought crisis

From Richard Wigg

Allahabad, Nov 13

Mr Rajendra Singh, the Irrigation Minister of Uttar Pradesh, India's largest agricultural state, badly hit by the failure of this year's monsoon rains, is a very busy man these days. He is not, however, working round the clock to see that whatever water is available is helping to raise an alternative winter crop. He is electioneering.

A journey through several of the state's worst affected districts from Benares to Cawnpore has given me the impression that India's general election scheduled for next January, is unwanted by millions of rural people enduring the most devastating drought since independence.

They are angry because there is no sense of urgency among the state's political leaders and officials to save them from the drought's fury. The first famine deaths have already started, though they are being routinely denied by officials.

If the winter rains prove to be disappointing now, these leaders and officials must be held responsible for the disaster. For the main question is why, with India's stock of 20 million tonnes of foodgrain, this tragedy threatens at all? The meteorological service warned the country last May that the monsoon might be weak this year and, anyway, India had enjoyed four years of record monsoon rainfall harvests.

Little has been done to avert disaster. Last week, Mr Chandra Singh, India's caretaker Prime Minister, summoned officials to Delhi and was still only warning them: "Do not be complacent."

However, the district magistrate in Banda, in the poorest Bundelkhand region 90 miles south-west of here, has served a warning that it will be a "stupendous trek" to save half-a-million people in his district of just over 1,500,000 inhabitants from mass starvation over the next few weeks. A million mouths may have to be fed till the new crop comes, he said.

Over northern India as a whole there now exists a hungry rural mass of 20 million people, half of them children. The high number of children involved probably explains why the situation is now more explosive.

In one village in Banda district, Harijan (formerly untouchable), a farmer owner in his 60s has told me of his village's bitter experience. Having first warned the authorities three months earlier of the

need for a "food for work" relief programme, the village's elected headman believed a fortnight ago that he had the go-ahead from the local development officer to start 30 hungry and unemployed villagers on building an earth link road.

They finished it in 10 days, only to learn that the development officer had ruled it had not been officially approved.

The man, in his forties, told me they had still received nothing for their work. He had his last laugh, however, concluding his rice and lentils two months ago. Since then he had eaten away his meagre stock and now had nothing. His wife sick with a kidney complaint lay motionless on a string bed.

In his office, the development officer explained: "There are 150 villages under my responsibility. Each will get its approved project, but there must be discipline for the villagers."

For this "discipline" 30 families go unnecessarily hungry. The work, now approved, was being measured while I was in the village. But things still move more slowly: two more sets of officials must visit the village and the allocation of rice is still days away.

The harsh realities of rural India are highlighted by the drought. You travel for miles by road seeing the eroded barren brown earth and the rare patches of bright green paddy, patches belonging to farmers able to afford their own tubewells.

A diesel-run pump set costs 10,000 rupees (£500) to purchase and install. India's biggest pump manufacturers did record business this autumn as a handful of better-off farmers bought themselves out of the monsoon failure.

Uttar Pradesh's 17 million marginal farmers and over six million landless labourers have been ignored for years. Many villagers in the Bundelkhand have no state-provided tube wells at all.

With an officially estimated loss of foodgrains in the monsoon crop of 11 million tonnes—though some put it nearer 18 million—against last year's 78 million tonnes monsoon crop, Dr A. S. Swaminathan, India's Agricultural Secretary, is hoping to recoup on the winter "rainy" crop.

That is the grand strategy devised in Delhi, but viewed from Uttar Pradesh the prospects look poor. The failure of the rain has cut hydro-electric power drastically. "It's just normal, like this time last year," he said.

South Africans agree to join Namibia meeting

From Our Correspondent

Geneva, Nov 13

The presence from tomorrow of a South African delegation will give stimulus to the United Nations-convened talks here on a demilitarized zone as a key element in a settlement over South-West Africa (Namibia).

Mr Alan Foulkes, South African Secretary for Foreign Affairs, is to have a busy role in the exchanges between representatives from the United Nations, the five African "front-line" states (Zambia, Angola, Botswana, Mozambique and Tanzania) the South-West Africa People's Organization (Swapo) and other Namibian groups and the group of five Western nations.

The aim is to elucidate details of the proposed demilitarized zone. It would stretch along Namibia's borders with Zambia, Angola and Botswana, extending 30 miles on either side of the frontier and be supervised by United Nations forces.

Both South Africa and Swapo are accusing each other of obstructing this essential part of a ceasefire.

Nuclear plant fear in Manila

Manila, Nov 13.—The Philippine Government declared today that a £500m nuclear power plant being built west of the capital was unsafe and demanded that Westinghouse Electric Corporation renegociate its "iniquitous and onerous" contract.

A three-man committee, formed in June to look into the plant's safety, found that it had "an old design plagued with unresolved safety issues, like earlier Westinghouse designs under review by the United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission." AP.

Moi Cabinet reshuffle likely soon

From Charles Harrison

President Daniel arap Moi is expected to make wide changes in his Cabinet soon. Last week's election removed half of the previous Parliament and seven of the 21 ministers.

The heavy turnover is characteristic of Kenyan elections, but more ministers than ever before failed to secure relection. In most cases local issues affected the polls, many MPs being blamed for not securing enough development projects for their own districts.

Among the ministers to lose their parliamentary seats is Mr Mbuyu Koinange, the Minister of Natural Resources, who was the late President Kenyatta's closest confidant as his Minister of State. His defeat emphasizes the steady move away from the era which ended with Mr Kenyatta's death last year, and the

need for a "food for work" relief programme, the village's elected headman believed a fortnight ago that he had the go-ahead from the local development officer to start 30 hungry and unemployed villagers on building an earth link road.

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Ohira struggles against hostile party faction

From Our Correspondent

Tokyo, Nov 13

Mr Masayoshi Ohira, the Japanese Prime Minister, is continuing his desperate efforts to organise the leadership structure of the crippled Liberal Democratic Party after having appointed what is generally regarded as the most vulnerable Cabinet in the party's history.

Mr Ohira was reelected as Prime Minister on Friday at a plenary session of the House of Representatives where he outvoted by a small margin Mr Takeshi Fukuda, the former Prime Minister and member of his own party, in the second vote.

The showdown between two contenders from the same party was the result of the party's poor performance at the general election more than a month ago, in which the LDP won by a slim majority over the combined Opposition.

In the Chamber of 511 members, the LDP had 249 votes, plus some independents. In the Friday vote all Opposition parties abstained except the New Liberal Club, a splinter from LDP, whose four members voted for Mr Ohira.

Under Japanese custom, a new Prime Minister first appoints the three top officers of the party, the secretary-general, chairman of the executive board and chairman of the policy board, with whom he then discusses Cabinet appointments.

This time, however, Mr Ohira reversed the procedural order in the face of resistance from an opposition inside the party led by Mr Fukuda, Mr Takeo Miki, another former Prime Minister, and Mr Yasuhiro Nakasone, former secretary-general. They have formed a splinter within the party in an attempt to oust Mr Ohira from the top government.

The list of the Cabinet is as follows: Prime Minister: Ohira; Foreign Affairs: Saburo Okita; Finance: Noboru Takeshita; Health and Welfare: Kyoshiro Noto; Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries: Toshio Okada; International Trade and Industry: Toshio Okada; Posts and Telecommunications: Masao Nakasone; the United Nations, Space and Telecommunications: Makoto Nakasone; the Ministry of Labour: Takuji Fujimura; Construction: Etsuji Nakano; Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry: Tadashi Nakamura; Ministry of Transport: Tadashi Nakamura; Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry: Tadashi Nakamura; Ministry of Education: Tadashi Nakamura; Ministry of Science and Technology: Tadashi Nakamura; Ministry of Health and Welfare: Tadashi Nakamura; Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport: Tadashi Nakamura; Ministry of Finance: Tadashi Nakamura; Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries: Tadashi Nakamura; Ministry of International Trade and Industry: Tadashi Nakamura; Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications: Tadashi Nakamura; 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THE ARTS

Elegy and energy

Judas Maccabaeus
Queen Elizabeth Hall

Stanley Sadie

Among Handel's oratorios *Judas Maccabaeus*, which long stood second in esteem only to *Messiah*, has lately had a bad press. Perhaps that is a commentary more on what we look for nowadays in Handel than on any inherent failings in the work. True, it is not dramatically subtle, in fact scarcely dramatic at all; but it does possess a quantity of strong appealing music, divided about equally between the elegiac and the energetic.

In Handel's day it was popular because it captured the national mood in the aftermath of the '45 rebellion; the Duke of Cumberland could easily be symbolized by *Judas Maccaebaeus*, the man who safeguarded the true faith. Later the number and the richness of its choruses endeared it to the Victorian public.

I and others hoped that this week's performance by the English Baroque Orchestra and Choir, might use authentic instruments and forces, thus putting to the test a work that for too long has been permitted to make its effect with the weight of massed choir-typical "big bow-wow" Handel, in fact, in the event it was a middle-of-the-road performance: a choir of about 65 with an orchestra based on 17 modern strings.

That is not a good balance; the orchestra is apt to vanish in the choruses. Handel used an orchestra larger than his choir, and for good reason. Still if we revive *Judas* because people want to sing it, this is how it must be. And they sang it well. Leon Lovett produced noble elegiac choral singing in Act I, shapely of line, precise over note-lengths, tellingly phrased. The choir is full-toned, especially in the outer voices, and accurate in attack. And after the rounded sound of a mixed choir almost all the evening the voices of the boys from Eton, Dulwich, Abingdon School, Eton, in "See the conquering hero", provided a welcome freshness and springency.

There was good, unpretentious solo singing. Janet Price was particularly spirited in her quick numbers, graceful too, and nicely catching the Purcellian pathos of "Ah! wretched Israel". Margaret Cable was her sure, tasteful partner, singing as touchingly as she was allowed in the rather fast tempo of the lovely "Father of Heaven". There was clean, accurate, slightly over-taut singing from Brian Rayner Cook, Brian Burrows, if not quite reaching the nonchalant vocal fervour needed for "Sound an alarm", showed exemplary articulation, and attractive sound. There was a pleasantly easy delivery in "With honour let desert be crowded", a piece remarkable for its original trumpet writing.



Simon Gray (left) and Alan Bates

Picture by Brian Hart

Striking up a stage partnership

Alan Bates has been the star of Simon Gray's two most successful stage plays. In 1971 came *Bulley*, the acerbic, dispeptic and ultimately devastating portrait of the English faculty whose weapons against him are the speed of his wit and the venom of his tongue. Simon Henshaw, the well-heeled publisher in *Otherwise Engaged*, who finds his evening of listening to Wagner constantly interrupted, followed a few years later. Bates and Gray renew their theatre partnership in *Stage Struck*, which opens at the Savoy Theatre on Wednesday.

Both are old enough hands to refuse to admit the possibility of another hit before the first line, let alone discuss it. But the run-in at the Richmond Theatre, the house that was used to smooth the rough edges of *Otherwise Engaged* before it went to the West End, has been drawing capacity audiences. The view across Richmond Green through the stained glass windows of the dress circle bar looked decidedly rosy and it was not just that the panes at eye level were tinted red. The previous night Alan Bates had drawn the applause given to returning heroes as Robert, who has taken up housewifery after failing to make a career on the stage and spends his time preparing succulent meals for a wife who marches from theatrical triumph to theatrical triumph.

How Simon Gray writes the role of Bulley with Alan Bates in mind? "No. We met for the first time when the play was being cast. Of course I'd seen him on stage and on screen and I'd been particularly impressed by his performance in John Schlesinger's *A Kind of Loving*, that marvellous film. I saw it in Cambridge and remember being impressed, not for the first nor the last time, by a critic's notice in the Cambridge Review, the dross magazine, New York and on the film set.

When at last he ailed the English faculty he had established a friendship with Gray. *Otherwise Engaged* was written mainly in Paris and Bates happened to be there at the same time.

Gray: "I had a room in one of Europe's seedier hotels. But it overlooked a street market and the chatter was an inspiration. An admirable place for writing if you didn't mind mice and cockroaches for company.

Bates: Michael Cacoyannis had lent me his Paris flat. I think he'd got wind of the fact that I'd got wind of the fact that was the favourite theme of the British cinema. In retrospect it was one of the most honest pictures of its time. But, to return to Bulley, it was Harold Pinter who cast me in *The Family Reunion* goes into the same category.

Gray: The play changed quite a bit in mood. We started off by laughing a lot and then as rehearsals went on we wiped off the smiles and became serious. Before the first night in Oxford none of us really knew what was going to happen so when the audience found it funny it came as something of a shock. There must have been a lot of doses of the laughs in the interval.

Bates: They synchronised with Ben Bulley or they recognised their enemies on stage.

Gray: Oxford naturally warms to a wicked sense of humour, particularly if it's linked to an equally wicked sense of character. In the West End it didn't take off at once and the reviews were mixed.

Bates: I enjoyed it more at the Morosco on Broadway. The Americans love to see plays about people falling apart and if they happen to be about characters as sympathetic as Bulley then that's all to the good. I think they also appreciated that his break-up was done in the "English" way without any screaming and shouting.

Gray: They didn't all like it. I find them rather hard to follow but I do like the echoes of the sentences Simon used to appear to stand there and listen while the rest of the cast got a lot of laughs with their foul language. Harold did indeed have to talk me into accepting Simon. (Assumption of authoritative, slightly menacing Pinter voice) "Aim, I think in due course you will find Simon quite satisfactory for you". So I began to get over my little paranoia about having so little to say and on we went.

Bulley and Tench have often been seen as different sides of the same character and doubtless there will be those who will claim Robert in *Stage Struck* is a third face. Stanley Cullinan counters the suggestion that he is using the middle-aged male in a crisis by claiming that most of his plays begin with a man in a room doing or saying something. *Stage Struck* is no exception and during the course of the evening Robert does quite a lot.

Perhaps this role at least was created for Bates?

Gray: No.

Bates: It's the third part you haven't written for me.

Gray: I had the four characters in mind for some time and I began putting them together when the rehearsals of *Closely Shaken* at the National were interrupted by labour disputes. I needed something to concentrate on to keep myself sane. Michael Cacoyannis, who's presenting the play, insisted on calling it a thriller although most good theatre from *Oedipus* to *The Family Reunion* goes into the same category.

Nevertheless Simon Gray has stuck to the rules of the whodunit game.

Gray: I happen to like thrillers, even if I did leave at the interval of the last one I saw in the theatre, murmuring something about "a pressing engagement elsewhere". Indeed I even wrote one a few years ago under a pseudonym.

Bates: When I finished it I thought, well, here's a marvellous play with marvellous parts for everyone but me. Simon appeared to stand there and listen while the rest of the cast got a lot of laughs with their foul language. Harold did indeed have to talk me into accepting Simon. (Assumption of authoritative, slightly menacing Pinter voice) "Aim, I think in due course you will find Simon quite satisfactory for you". So I began to get over my little paranoia about having so little to say and on we went.

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After all the major male roles, Simon Gray has arrived in a new time he offered a sympathetic female?

Gray: Of course. Again from the face that I'm going to do a little teaching. I'd love to write out. Perhaps we'll get Alan to play it in drag.

John Higgins

An old master's joyful wisdom

The honours of the first week in the wide-ranging London Film Festival (90 films in 18 days) are fairly equally divided between old masters and exciting debuting. For me the marvel of the whole show comes from the older of the old masters: John Huston is 73, but his *Wide Blood* has still the vigour and the innocent joy in human oddity that distinguished his youthful masterworks. It is based on a novel by Flannery O'Connor, but its life seems to start right out of the screen. A grim, intense and brilliant new actor, Brad Dourif, plays the hero, a mean and angry ex-serviceman vainly trying to escape from the shackles of his ignorance and a conscience formed by hell-fire Christian upbringing. The confusion of his soul is further compounded by the kindly fools and malvolent fakes who make up his world in a small Southern township.

Huston's genius is to make it look so easy to get it right, to get the words right, the characters right, the performances right, the images right; to juggle low farce, horror, folly, near tragedy, human pathos and never fumble a point.

Like the best parables, Huston's *Wide Blood* is deceptively simple in the telling, unfathomable and mischievously teasing in retrospect. It has nearly as many as melodious, yet again there was too much hurry, particularly in the episodes; when notes are played thus fast they blur into a single sound and their effect is not that of the speed intended, towards the close some of the phrase endings were clipped.

Beethoven's *Appassionata* Sonata, opus 57, is a very different work yet received a fairly similar performance. Quiet passages, such as the opening, were beautiful in their tone and clarity, but loud ones were sometimes unkempt. This was especially so towards the end of the first movement and again in the finale. The overall impression created by both the outer movements was of a series of pianistic moments rather than of tightly argued structures. Again the slow movement was best, a beautiful tone-making a virtue of this piece's unity rather than its diversity.

A different master—almost disconcertingly so—was Mr Barenboim's account of the *Die Zauberflöte*, Variations, opus 120. Although he made them sound like a sequence of improvisations, he nearly everything was precisely defined, each in turn. It was hard not to feel that this work interested him for more than the sonatas.

charlatans, decadents and idiots, who walk out leaving their host sadder, wiser and very much poorer. It is all rather like a Jonsonian comedy of humours, and if its social point seems at one and the same time too obvious and too broad, it has a lot of funny performers and nice gags.

Miklós Jancsó's diptych *Vitam et Spernitam*—originally intended as a trilogy—is being shown complete, under the title of the first part, *Hungarian Rhapsody*. The most costly film ever made in Hungary, it marks in some respects a peak of Jancsó's skill at abstract choreography for the cinema screen.

Photographed by his regular and resourceful cameraman Janos Kende, its images are breathtaking. The camera lingers, darts, runs and leaps among swirling formations of soldiers, peasants, mist, smoke, water, naked men and women, horses, motor-cycles, hand-globes; everything is Jancsó's language, his confidence formed by hell-fire Christian upbringing. The confusion of his soul is further compounded by the kindly fools and malvolent fakes who make up his world in a small Southern township.

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Dazzling waste

John Everett Millais
National Museum of Wales, Cardiff

John Russell Taylor

Of all the Pre-Raphaelites John Everett Millais was the most dazzlingly talented and the most alarmingly wasteful of that talent. We know all too well what tends to happen to young revolutionaries, but all the same it is very difficult to believe that *Bubbles* was painted by the same man as *Christ in the Carpenter's Shop*. The artist goes from a high point of technical skill to a low point of technical incompetence, from a high point of imaginative originality to a low point of unimaginative repetition. The young revolutionary's achievements, for these really to be, are stunning. There seems to be nothing this astonishing lad did not know how to do with crisp line or white wash by the age of 17 or 18; just look at the mannered, perverse, almost grotesque yet magisterial *Disembarkation of Queen Mette* of Flaubert done when he was barely 18. Or the complex yet totally readable composition of the unfinished *Eve of the Deluge* a year later. And then, at the tense, neurotic time of his elopement with Ruskin's wife—in the mid-1850s, there are the darker, more violently dramatic drawings, many of them coincidentally produced on commission as illustrations for novels or poems, but some apparently done just to work out something in Millais's own emotions.

It has not been a great year for French cinema, The London Film Festival programme calls Hugo Santiago's fantasy thriller *Ecoutez, voilà...* "fascinating"; I found it intolerably pretentious, arty and camp. Eric Rohmer's *La Vie des Perceval le Gallois* is "wonderful words".

The new generation of Indian film-makers is represented by strongly contrasted works. From Kerala, G. Aravindan's *The Circus Tent* is a diffuse, dreamlike and mesmeric contemplation of the coming and goings of a shabby little rural circus. The show people go about their affairs with total absorption: life is lived. Aravindan has a flair for the arresting image, and a special quality of watching and waiting for the last moment and the last gesture which complete the whole significance of a shot.

Maurizio Nichetti's triumph at the Venice Festival with his *Rataplan* makes this, perhaps, the debut of the year. It

is tough on him, all the same, to overdo him with praise as the London Festival programme does ("to the ranks of Jonsonian comedy of humours, and if its social point seems at one and the same time too obvious and too broad, it has a lot of funny performers and nice gags").

Gray: This is a key film in the new socially critical mood of the young Polish cinema. It is a high point of his plays begin with a man in a room doing or saying something. *Stage Struck* is no exception and during the course of the evening Robert does quite a lot.

John Higgins

Dangerous

deeds

John Everett Millais

National Museum of Wales, Cardiff

John Russell Taylor

John Everett Millais

National Museum of Wales, Cardiff

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JUL 15 1979

The Times News Review

How the world went round while our back was turned

As soon as our backs were turned, events seemed to start happening at twice the normal pace. In Iran, Kampuchea, South Africa, Uganda and many other countries (not to mention Westminster, Edinburgh and New Printing House Square) the scene last November seems an epoch away, not just a year. These transformations reinforced the sense of disorientation apt to be felt in this office during the hiatus in our own affairs.

At first we had to repress a sense of incredulity that time could continue when *The Times* did not. But before long it was hard to avoid the impression that our paper must have served as a kind of pendulum to world events which, deprived of its restraint, were rattling away with an absurd and unrealistic rapidity. The events of the interim, not fully legitimate as part of recorded history by inclusion in our columns, could quite plausibly have been spread over two or three years without giving the least impression of thinness.

It would have been easy enough, admittedly, to predict Mrs Margaret Thatcher—but not the baleful Ayatollah—not military hostilities between China and Vietnam—not the spectacle of Dr Julius Nyerere proving a mightier man of war than Idi Amin—not Vorster disgraced, with a new South African Prime Minister speculating about the future of the laws against miscegenation—not the Pope in Phoenix Park—not British Leyland agreeing to build Hondas—not the virtual extinction of the devolution issue—not Chairman Huo Guofeng at Claredges.

It will be recalled that when we were interrupted Mr James Callaghan

was riding high. Only shortly before, at the peak of his confidence, he had burst publicly into song to deride eager election-date tipsters. In retrospect, the decision not to go to the country in the autumn appears the first sign that his sureness of touch, or his luck (much the same thing in politics), had left him.

In December the Government's 5 per cent wages policy melted away at the first test. Industrial action at the BBC seemed likely to black out Christmas programmes including the first televised screening of *The Sound of Music*. Greatly concerned at this threat to the British Christmas (ironically, in view of the stoic public reaction to the very intermittent availability of television in the months to come), the Government recommended reference to the Central Arbitration Committee, which, acting in providential fashion reminiscent of the Official Solicitor, precipitately awarded not 5 per cent but 12.

The stamps that followed settled the outcome of the election. Regardless of political consequences, unions in many fields set out frankly to use their muscle. Lorry drivers mounted pickets for wide, uncollected rubbish blocked the pavements, trains were halted, a thousand schools were closed and scores of hospitals barred all but emergency admissions. Repeated stoppages by customs officers enabled returning travellers to bring brandy and cigars home unchallenged, while at least one of the hundreds of bereaved families distressed by a cemetery workers' strike turned to and dug the necessary grave themselves.

The winter, meanwhile, was the

worst for 15 years, with snow, floods, gales and ice in Dickensian quantities. Mr Callaghan's luck required him to visit the West Indies for a summit conference, an affair in which shirt-sleeves, sunshades and long cool drinks unavoidably figured, as we all jealously observed. Returning sun-tanned, he ill-advisedly tried to strike the unflappable note at an airport interview, and an entire nation nursing its chilblains yearned as one to stuff his head first into a snowdrift.

Memories of all this might have faded if the Government could have held out until autumn. But then came the referendum. Devolution, that great constitutional bugbear, which had bedevilled an entire Parliament, was dismissed as a bore by the Welsh and endorsed by the Scots so grudgingly that the legislation automatically lapsed. Needing the continued parliamentary support both of devolutionists and anti-devolutionists, Mr Callaghan played ignominiously for time. When that failed, he played ignominiously for votes in the Commons.

When that failed, he gathered his dignity and fought bravely for office, at the head of a party already demoralized and fractious. As soon as defeat removed the irksome responsibilities of office, the party blithely abandoned all thought of social contracts and concordats for the delights of infighting.

Many observers did not quite believe in the new Government. It was suspected that Mrs Thatcher did not really mean what she said, or that if she did, Whitehall would soon talk her out of it. The election-date tipsters all

became tipsters for the date of the U-turn.

After six months, it appears that she did mean most of it after all. She fearlessly gave effect to everything that British businessmen had long been clamouring for, and has been rewarded with the sharpest drop in business confidence for years. Investment is sluggish, and wage inflation (already back in double figures at the turn of the year) is moving resolutely up towards 20 per cent. Energetic steps to control secondary picketing, to extirpate quangos, to get council houses sold and to unburden the taxpayer seem almost marginal beside the immense task of putting zip back into a trading economy at a time of deepening world recession.

For, however stirring events at home may seem, outside affairs cramp the ideological style of any British government. When the oil producing nations tighten the screws on the world, the benefits of our own small oil output are too apt to be drained away by an unhealthily strong pound. The new oil crisis was a direct consequence of the most spectacular event of the entire year, the overthrow of the Shah (all his tanks and jet fighters notwithstanding) by a morose priest of 79.

It was an astonishing (inspiring? appalling?) reminder of the force of religious feeling in a world that often seems to run on realpolitik. While the West was still shuddering at this reminder of the vulnerable nature of its energy supplies, an American nuclear power station booted over and threatened to depopulate half Pennsylvania, casting a shadow over all hopes residing in the nuclear alternative.

The vast crowds that acclaimed the

Ayatollah on his return from exile were paralleled by the crowds that welcomed a very different helicopter-borne priest, the new Pope, as he travelled to reaffirm old values compellingly in the vernacular at Cracow, Auschwitz, Drogheda and Harlem.

Especially in Poland and Ireland (still haunted by the influences which had shortly before caused the deaths of Airey Neave and Lord Mountbatten) his words carried an extraordinary political weight. It was apparent that the Pope (like the Ayatollah) had many battalions: but it remained less clear how fully either of them were in control of the forces on which their strength rested.

The Shah was one of rather many autocrats who fell while we were not there to comment. By ordinary standards, the three worst regimes in the entire world were those of Amin, Bokassa and Pol Pot, and all three of them have disappeared—though in at least two cases out of the three, the state of the people who were the victims of the tyranny has scarcely improved since. Pol Pot, who burnt the hoses and fishing nets as well as slaughtering the literate, may already have caused the deaths of a third of his people, and his policies will kill many more yet.

In the Middle East, Egypt and Israel finally signed their peace treaty after a year of suspense. Egypt was promptly boycotted by the Arab League, but the treaty did bring one glimmer of good cheer to President Carter in a bad year. The arms limitation treaty that he signed with President Brezhnev ("God will not forgive us if we fail" said the Communist leader devoutly) aroused deep suspicions in Congress, which must

yet endorse it. Rhodesia acquired a new constitution and name ("Zimbabwe-Rhodesia"), and its leaders came to Lancaster House for a convoluted exchange of half-empty threats with the guerrilla leaders and Lord Carrington.

The English summer occurred in October this year. While we were waiting for it, we could console ourselves with Sebastian Coe's world record for the mile (3min 48.09sec) and with England's easy success in the Tests in Australia. Arsenal won the Cup: Nottingham Forest won the European Cup with the help of Trevor Francis, whom they had earlier acquired for £1m, twice as much as any previous transfer fee.

All this we missed, and much more. The island of Iona was bought for the nation: the magazine *Now* appeared on the streets; Jeremy Thorpe kept mum and was acquitted; two large blocks of flats were blown up in Birkenhead because they were so ugly that no one would live in them; taunting voices were broadcast claiming to be the Yorkshire Ripper and a representative of the organization that murdered Airey Neave: it became a crime in Sweden for a parent to slap a child. In West Germany, Herr Schmidt, the Chancellor, prepared to square up to Herr Franz Josef Strauss; in America, Mr Carter prepared to square up to Mr John Connally, or was it Senator Edward Kennedy? It is vexing to have missed so much, but there is every indication that there are ample supplies of history still in store, piping hot. It is one natural resource that shows no sign of drying up.

George Hill

Government keeps its nerve after six months of bold strokes

By Fred Emery
Political Editor

Awe is the dominant reaction among observers of Britain's "new" government. Awe that after six months in office Mrs Margaret Thatcher and her Ministers have kept their nerve. With the November announcement of a £5,000 cut from public expenditure for 1980-81 coming after the £350m "economy" in the June Budget, the Government is pressing ahead as it set out, from the trough of deepest economic depression.

Ministers are convinced that they are on the only course left for national regeneration—that they must reward all who have gone through the buffeting of the coming 18 months.

The Prime Minister, evidently impervious whenever anyone compares her to Churchill, or revives the Iron Lady label, has so far personified this Government's style. She does what she said she would, and issues plain unabridging statements to the press and colleagues alike. She manages to identify with the bold gestures, be they in seeming heading policy, lurches, such as up with VAT and down with income tax, and out with price and exchange controls, or be they strokes of genius, such as the now-familiar trip to Copenhagen in August, the height of reaction to the Mountbatten and Warwicke murders by the IRA.

An American bridge-sapper, a German central banker, a French diplomat speaks of course, but Mrs Thatcher's right-wing politics join her admirers in speaking of the marvellous flair she has shown for the job, and the unremitting hard work she brings to it. Some rather resent that the Cabinet efforts are seen to be a "thin red line" dividing.

The fact is, however, that led by this unfinishing woman the body of men in Cabinet and Government, many of them schooled and practised in the British consensus of pragmatic adjustment, let themselves be swept into a high-risk policy gamble. It is 1980's *taisse faire*—allowing people within a monetary strait jacket, to see how bad things can get before they get better. The only question is whether, having made its policy decisions, the Government can now stand back as it avows.

Cynics have been predicting

political U-turns almost since May 4 when Mrs Thatcher entered Number 10, quoting Sir Francis Bacon: "The Government, hardly harassed by the Leyland workers' ballot, favouring company re-enchantment, the cynics may have to wait."

These are early, heady days. But with the Labour Party and TUC in disarray, the Government are counting on getting through this winter without a repetition of the disruption last January, unless it be a rail strike.

But for 1980-81 the word is beginning to break out, and for the first time, with some doubt around Thatcher. Mrs Thatcher has quite grasped what she did, the economy could then be.

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Mrs Thatcher: Making our system more presidential.

in the crusade to bring people to reason.

Although it has not retreated under fire, the Government has not swerved from its original intentions. It has switched from extolling the necessity of cuts to pretending that it is not cutting, merely "stabilizing". It has ended up courting two bouts of unpopularity—the present one over cuts in local services, and the second, next spring, when charges by utilities will increase and prescription costs go up to 70%. Local authorities are bound to raise rates.

The fact that overall public

spending could turn out the same for the three years 1979-81

conceals the real shift in priorities, particularly the

£1,000m cut of Government funds to local authorities. Cuts there will continue to cause most hardship and protest and make least sense.

The Government's only apparent regret is that so far it has not been able to undo most of Labour's legacy. This single-mindedness is concentrated in economic policy. It is seated in the team of monetarists. Mrs Thatcher has built at the core of her Government, on the Cabinet's economic committee, her writ runs supreme with the Treasury team of Sir Geoffrey Howe, Mr John Biffen and Mr Nigel Lawson and Sir Keith Joseph at Industry and Mr John Nott at Trade. The only Minister who got much change out of them was not so much

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Liberals far from being eclipsed

By Ian Bradley

A year ago the Liberals' position could hardly have been worse. The party had lost its deposit in 19 of the 27 seats it had contested in by-elections, more than during any other Parliament since the war.

The pact with the Labour Government, to which Mr David Steel had committed his party in the spring of 1977, had ended, apparently leaving the Liberals where they had been when it started and without any tangible gains in popularity.

The Liberals were also demoralized and dispirited by the conspiracy to murder charge which hung over their former leader, Mr Jeremy Thorpe, and by police investigations into the party's finances and the dealings of the National Liberal Club.

The last three months of 1978 were a particularly bad time. Mr

Pressures of war and sanctions helping Britain's Rhodesia strategy

From Nicholas Ashford
Johannesburg

constitution because it left power in white hands.

The British Government, realizing that any settlement needed black African approval if it were to bring peace and recognition to the country, came round to the view that the new constitution was "defective".

At the Commonwealth meeting in Lusaka in August it was agreed that Britain should convene a conference in London to see whether a settlement could be worked out between the internal Zimbabwe-Rhodesia Government and the external Patriotic Front guerrilla alliance, headed by Mr Robert Mugabe and Mr Joshua Nkomo.

Britain was also given authority to draw up another constitution, in which white powers would be reduced but minority (white) interests safeguarded, and to organize new elections for all parties.

Now that Lancaster House talks in London are entering their final phase it looks as though the Thatcher-Carrington strategy may succeed where Sir Harold Wilson, Lord Home, Dr Henry Kissinger, Dr David Owen and others failed. By early next year Rhodesia should have finally become Zimbabwe and the 14-year rebellion by the white minority brought to an end.

The "firm" approach adopted by Mrs Thatcher and Lord Carrington is only a small part of the answer to why the present Government looks like being more successful than its predecessors, although the "firmness" has helped to prevent the Lancaster House talks from degenerating into a repetition of the 1976 Geneva fiasco. Of more importance have been the pressures put on the main protagonists—the Salisbury Government

and the Patriotic Front—to make one last attempt to reach a negotiated settlement rather than fight out.

Internally these pressures are the result of a combination of sanctions and the rapidly intensifying war. When Bishop Muzorewa was elected, he promised his supporters peace, recognition and an end to sanctions. None of these pledges has been fulfilled. The war has got worse, accounting for 7,000 lives this year, and that does not include those killed during the security forces' frequent attacks into neighbouring Zambia and Mozambique.

The war, which is costing about £1m a day, and sanctions have prevented a revival of the country's economy which Bishop Muzorewa was counting on (together with hopes of foreign aid and investment) to provide

the jobs, schools, houses and effort and its claims to control land which his supporters were expecting from a blackled "front line" state, especially as the war has increased the

Government's failure to satisfy black expectations has been reflected in the recent announcement of price cuts on essentials such as maize, sugar and petrol.

On the other side the Patriotic Front has also come under pressure from its backers, the black "front line" states, to see whether it can achieve by negotiation what it has failed to gain by war.

Despite the Front's increase in military activities, it is still far from influencing decisions on the Rhodesian security forces. Indeed, in failure seriously to disrupt the April elections, as it had threatened, raised doubts about the effectiveness of its war

Another factor crucial is allowing the Lancaster House talks to progress as far as they have been. The political demise of Mr Ian Smith, the man who led the Rhodesian whites into rebellion 14 years ago.

When he handed over to Bishop Muzorewa as the country's first black Prime Minister in June something which he had once declared would not happen in a thousand years he believed he would continue to control the levers of power in his capacity as Minister without portfolio. However, his influence has declined steadily to the extent that he was the only member of the Rhodesian delegation to vote against accepting the constitutional proposals drawn up by Britain.

Even his hitherto unassailed position as leader of the country's 250,000 whites has disintegrated. When he returned to the country in October to muster white opposition against the new constitution he found himself out of tune with most whites who were looking instead for direction from Lieutenant-General Peter Walls, the military commander, and Mr David Smith, the Finance Minister.

The whites have finally realized that their future is likely to be more secure in a genuine partnership with black "front line" states rather than trying to maintain white supremacy behind a facade of black rule as Mr Smith hoped to achieve.

Loss of faith in Carter presidency suggests victory for either Senator Kennedy or Republicans

From Patrick Brogan
Washington

President Carter is being weighed on the balance, now, as it is being interpreted by Senator Kennedy and a host of others, that he has been found wanting and that if Mr Kennedy does not take the presidency away from him, the Republicans will.

The Government of the United States, Legislature and administration, is now shut down for the election. Although there is a certain amount of unfinished business left, most notably the Senate debate on SALT 2, Mr Carter's first term is over, as far as his own actions and leadership are concerned. Only ungovernable economic forces and disrespectful foreigners will impinge upon domestic and political concerns for the next year.

A comparison with President Nixon's reelection year, 1972, helps demonstrate the complete intellectual barrenness of the Carter presidency. Whatever else may be said about Mr Nixon, he at least had a foreign and an economic policy. There was some thought behind it, and even leaving aside the Vietnam peace negotiations, that policy bore fruit in 1972 with the President's visits to Peking and Moscow.

During the 1976 election campaign Mr Carter was nearly



Senator Kennedy announcing his challenge for the Democratic presidential nomination.

unhinged by unkind people asking what were his "stands on the issues", meaning did he have any policy? It is not clear to even the most faithful that he had no policies, no ideas about what direction America should be taking either at home or abroad, beyond promising economy, truthfulness and love.

Mr Carter's three years have proved him one of the least efficient of modern presidents, not through a lack of intelligence or industry, but through ignorance. He knew nothing about Washington and has refused to learn. In his purge of

The year's news in brief

December : EEC nations agree on system to link their currencies; Britain does not join. Two Commons defeats compel Government to abandon its principal weapon to enforce an incomes policy, sanctions against employers.

Deaths of Mrs Golda Meir and President Houari Boumedienne of Algeria.

January : Shah forced to leave Iran after months of rioting.

Capital of Cambodia falls to Vietnamese-backed forces. Worst winter weather in Britain for 15 years.

Deaths of Nelson Rockefeller, Lord Stow Hill and Peter Luigi Nervi.

February : China invades Vietnam (withdrawing its forces after a month).

Government "Concordat" with TUC.

England retain Ashes in Australia by a record 5-1 margin.

Deaths of Reginald Maudling, Jean Renoir, Sid Vicious.

March : Devolution referendum : four out of five Welsh voters say "no"; Scottish voters say "yes" by so small a majority that the legislation lapses. Devolutionist MPs cease to support the Government, and it falls by one vote.

Accident at nuclear power station at Three Mile Island, USA.

EEC Commission confirms that Britain is now largest contributor to Community funds.

Deaths of Jean Monnet and Aymeric Neave, who was killed by April : Tanzanian forces seeking to overthrow President Amin enter the capital of Uganda.

Death of Blair Peach in clashes with police during anti-National Front demonstrating in Southall.

Arab League boycott of Egypt over treaty with Israel.

The Times attempts to print an edition at Darmstadt, West Germany.

Deaths of Bernard Leach and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, who was executed for conspiracy to murder.

May : Conservatives win General Election with overall majority of 44.

USA and USSR reach agreement on SALT 2 armaments treaty.

Canadian general election : Pierre Trudeau defeated by Joe Clark.

271 die in DC-10 crash in Chicago : all DC-10s grounded.

Price of petrol passes £1 per gallon.

Nottingham Forest win European Cup.

Deaths of Mary Pickford and Jean Rhys.

June : The Pope visits Poland.

President Vorster of South Africa resigns over Muldergate scandal.

Budget: threepence off income tax, VAT up to 15 per cent.

Jeremy Thorpe and co-defendants acquitted of conspiring to kill Norman Scott.

Deaths of John Wayne, E. V. Morton ("Beachcomber").

July : President Somosa of Nicaragua overthrown.

President Carter's self-doubt : his entire Cabinet offer their resignations.

Bjorn Borg wins men's singles at Wimbledon for fourth successive year.

Skylab fails to earth in Australia.

The Queen arrives in Lusaka for Commonwealth Summit.

Deaths of John Davies and Professor Herbert Marcuse.

August : President Carter dismisses Andrew Young for negotiating with PLO.

Lord Mountbatten killed by IRA; Mrs Thatcher visits Crossmaglen.

Series of two-day engineering strikes begins (settlement involving shorter working week agreed in October).

17th Fastnet Race competitors die in storm.

Entire ITV network goes off the air because of industrial action, blackout lasts 75 days.

September : Talks on future of Zimbabwe-Rhodesia begin at Lancaster House.

Overthrow of Emperor Bokassa of the Central African Empire.

Deaths of Dame Gracie Fields and Dr Agostinho Neto, President of Angola.

October : The Pope visits Ireland and the USA.

President Park of South Korea assassinated.

UK removes almost all exchange controls.

Deaths of Sir Gerald Templer, Sir Barnes Wallis, George Woodcock and S. J. Perelman.

November : US Embassy in Iran seized by demonstrators demanding return of the Shah for punishment.

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Government presses ahead with policy gamble

Continued from page 1

Mr James Prior, at Employment, facing his rearguard action to prevent collision with the unions, but Mr David Howell at Energy, who guarded Cabinets after an intense struggle, not to dismantle the North Sea assets of the British National Oil Corporation.

In this group it is noteworthy that no Minister has yet made his mark on wider public consciousness. In this sense Mrs Thatcher is her own Chancellor and economics overruled. But she is not her own Home Secretary. Mr William Whitelock is belatedly emerging as the human face of Thatcherism with his cuddly reassuring good sense; yet he is custodian of prickly reforms in penal treatment, immigration and the restrictive Official Information Bill.

Of course, Mr Peter Walker has also enjoyed the spotlight, donning armour like an Agriculture Minister to fight off European predators. But in foreign affairs it is Lord Carrington who emerges most conspicuously.

An outsider could be tempted to say that the Government, given hard times and its defi-

ciency of unpopularity, has been performing better than might have been expected. But there is criticism aplenty.

It has already been amply reported that Mrs Thatcher and her private office have been driving Cabinet colleagues and their civil servants to distraction with their policies.

Not unimportantly is the departmental ministers for whom the knives are out now: with Mr Patrick Jenkins, Mr Mark Carlisle and Mr Michael Heseltine bearing the brunt of criticism for their handling of the Government's supposedly non-existent cuts.

There are also enemies abroad for Mr Prior, for his supposed appearance of the unions, for Mr Angus Mandie, the Paymaster General, for his shuffling of the Government's message.

Were some of these young

Tory Turks to be satisfied the first Cabinet reshuffle would have no equal for the flogging of long knives. It will not come to that. But it will be interesting to see if Mrs Thatcher can leave well alone and keep her nerve or whether by spring someone will have to pay for the Government's deepening unpopularity.

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REVIEW

It's becoming more professional and less vulnerable

2-8 **Swing audacity of IRA attacks blights hope of bringing Ulster closer to peace**

T. J. O. Hickey
Nothing has happened in the twelve months to bring the Ulster closer or the visible than elusive land, a "solution" of the Ulster-Irish problem.

A year ago it was possible to believe, with some encouragement from Mr Roy Mason, then Secretary of State, that the Ulster and army were progressively mastering the Provisional IRA, and that exhaustion or extinction might bring about at least a temporary cessation of campaign.

It was possible to believe also that with the abatement of violence the politicians of Ulster might be more inclined to agree working arrangements for provincial self-government. The tactics of terrorist crime and criminal justice nourished hope.

Yet at that very time, in November, 1978, the head of the Secret Intelligence Service was presenting an official appraisal of the capacity of the IRA which contradicted that view. His report was later and obligingly made public by its subject matter.

Organization in cellular structure, he observed, had the Provisionals less dependent on public support and less vulnerable to informers. A number of its activists operating in Northern Ireland is put at 500 including "informed, astute and experienced terrorists who provide the backbone of the organization". The active service units were "the most part manned by recruits of up to ten years continual experience. The level of professionalism and exploitation of technology could be expected to increase."

There were still parts of the country where the IRA could be thought to risk little risk of betrayal and cause on active sport in emergency. The Republic provided many of the facilities of a safe haven. The proceeds of robberies provided ample funds. Modern and meticulous the best weapons could be had. The organization had the capacity to recruit in order to maintain a campaign violence for the foreseeable future.

Events were soon to confirm the general tone of this appraisal as the IRA mounted ever more audacious attacks on soldiers and policemen and they grimly call prestige targets—although the murder of Mr Airey Neave, the Conservative party's spokesman on Northern Ireland, was the work of another republican sect, the



The Pope arriving in Ireland for his three-day visit.

on the part of the British Government.

They did not specify the form of the initiative. It could be assumed they meant whatever Mr Lynch meant by the same phrase, except that Mr Lynch did not say what the thing was. He has as his back Flannan Fail's demand first made in opposition in 1975 that the British Government announce an intention to withdraw from Northern Ireland.

Mr Lynch alludes to this from time to time with verbal modifications which somewhat weaken its force. But he has not exactly pressed it upon London. Since the Mountbatten murder his demands have not gone beyond a requirement that Britain gets on with the business of setting up internal institutions in Northern Ireland acceptable to both communities.

Caustic reminders of the IRA's powers of destruction told against the chances of mending the damaged institutions of Ulster. Yet the British Government came under increasing pressure to do something about it. From Dublin, from continental European capitals and not least from the United States where certain Irish American notables, including Mr T. P. O'Neill, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Governor Hugh Carey of New York, were calling for a major initia-

charge is one to which Mr Lynch is vulnerable. That was made plainer than ever by the publication in October of a survey of opinion made by the government-funded Economic and Social Research Institute in Dublin.

It concluded that the objectives, and even the activities, of the IRA receive an unexpectedly high level of support in the Republic. The survey has been impugned both out of wishful thinking and on the ground of professional incomparability, but it remains a disturbing piece of evidence.

The field work for the study was done in 1978, but even the Pope's visit to Ireland in September of this year is likely to have rendered out of date a survey of a nation which is far from the historical consciousness of the Irish people. The Pope's presence in Ireland evoked a religious response of extraordinary amplitude. The celebrations took part also of national rejoicing.

The crowds and the ceremonial brilliantly illustrated the Catholic character of contemporary Irish nationalism. Ulster Protestants can only have viewed the scenes with misgiving, for all that they have a high regard for the present Pope and were among those who welcomed him to Ireland.

The Pope beseached the men of violence to forswear their ways: "On my knees I beg you...". The men of violence gave their reply in the same week by the murder of two former volunteers in the Ulster Defence Regiment and their claim that since force was the only means of removing the evil of the British presence in Northern Ireland they needed no other justification. "Upon victory the Church will have no difficulty in recognizing us."

As soon as Parliament re-assembled Mr Mason said that the outcome of the review, though there was little that either side prepared to show him. Also within the space of a few months changes were made throughout the high command in Ulster.

Mr Humphrey Atkins, succeeded Mr Mason as Secretary of State as a consequence of political events elsewhere. A new chief constable and GOC were due and announced—Mr Richard Lawson and General Maurice Oldfield, the retired head of the Secret Intelligence Service was appointed security coordinator with suitably shadowy responsibilities.

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This attitude towards the unification of Ireland of willing simultaneously the objective and its postponement is not proof against better mental.

Miss Sile de Valera, a granddaughter of the founder of Flannan Fail and a youthful member of the Irish Daill, in a fiery oration at the grave of one of the patriot dead has recently accused Mr Lynch of a want of republicanism. The challenge was abortive, but the

challenge was again.

Pope takes on role of popular leader

By Gifford Longles
Religious Affairs

Pope John Paul II's progress round Mexico, Poland, Ireland and the United States, and across the television screens and newspaper headlines of the world, raised him in the course of a few months to the status of a popular and respected world figure.

There is no one with whom his reputation can be compared, no previous pope, no contemporary political leader, no outstanding personality in any field of his stature. Not since Gandhi has spiritual and moral leadership had such immediate and dramatic popular acclaim.

The ability to communicate friendliness to a vast audience, which seems to be the key to Pope John Paul's enormous attraction, was never mentioned when he was a factor favouring his election, and it is most likely that none of the cardinal electors saw in him more than a passing thought.

The capacity to play a star role on a stage set by mass media is a new aspect, and possibly a decisive one, in shaping the papacy. It sets for the Pope the role not so much of that of "supreme pastor", his own predecessor's description of it, but "supreme preacher", the ultimate in communication.

If the Christian leaders of Britain say, wished to catch the attention of the ordinary people of London, say, with a spiritual message that they would hear and remember, a visit from Pope John Paul would unquestionably be their very best bet. It is in the light of such considerations as this that churchmen are beginning to reconsider all sorts of tactics and strategies, and to look again at such inexcusable problems as the barriers to Christian unity.

Not all of them find Pope John Paul's style one which fills them with hope and encouragement. Various non-Roman Catholic church leaders have come to no easy conclusion. Nor surely is the papacy itself a traditional source of division, and the evolution of the papacy in the hands of a great pope not for them a trend in the right doctrinal direction, but some facets of the Pope's stance on controversial issues are seen as increasing the obstacles to greater interdenominational cooperation and the goal of unity.

Such misgivings are directed not to the main doctrinal thrust of Pope John Paul's often-repeated message but to its peripheral accompaniment, the things he appears to take for granted as part of the orthodox pattern of catholic morality and ments as if they were obvious and beyond dispute.

The central theme the Pope repeats is a development of Catholic philosophy in the direction of theistic humanism. He first set it out in his opening encyclical letter *Redemptor Hominis*. It shifts the emphasis from an other-worldly spirituality which sees religion as being essentially about God and the church—which has been a tendency in Roman Catholicism since the Reformation—to a focus upon humanity.

His *utmost* is the phrase "human dignity", which he offers as the fundamental criterion of all morality, and which blends well with his emphasis on human rights as the necessary conditions for the dignity to be enhanced and protected. This concept of human dignity is one he relates directly to fundamental Catholic dogma.

There is scope here for future doctrinal quarrels in the Roman Catholic Church, and for frustration in liberal Protestant churches which are moving towards a less dogmatic attitude to the central themes of Christianity. But at the same time it places the Roman Catholic Church unambiguously on the side of all those—the majority of mankind—who lack the essentials for a dignified human existence.

In Mexico the Pope applied this teaching to the appalling poverty and inequality in South America; in Poland he applied it to the totalitarian denial of intellectual and spiritual freedom. In Ireland he applied it to a fundamental doctrinal conservatism, leading directly (and remarkably) to a progressive and sometimes radical political and social outlook.

This characteristic conservatism is most controversial in the moral sphere, for the Pope has displayed no doubts or hesitations in his defence of ultra-traditional Roman Catholic ethics. He has pronounced abortion, contraception, divorce and sexual liberty to be quite incompatible with human dignity.

It is paradoxical, therefore, that many of those who have felt the magnetism of his personality, do not in fact share his convictions. His commitment to human dignity, differently derived from theirs, is nevertheless instantly grasped as authentic and as something which means a great deal to people used to being treated without much dignity and respect.

If this adulation of the masses strengthens the moral power of the papacy, reversing the trends towards democratization and decentralization in the Roman Catholic Church itself, however, then Pope John Paul's reign may turn the church away from the direction it set itself at the Second Vatican Council. The crucial factor will be his attitude towards dissent and doctrinal pluralism inside his own church, and on that he has yet to reveal himself clearly.

Whitehall admits concern over prospect of winter discontent

By Paul Rounledge
Labour Editor

Ministers are approaching the winter wage round with more equanimity than might have been expected after the horror forecast made at the time of the general election. They sense that the TUC general council is not in a mood for full-scale conflict over pay or industrial relations legislation.

However, with wage settlements of 15, 17 and 20 per cent becoming common, and the Transport and General Workers' Union pressing on the front page of its journal the names of firms that have conceded a shorter working week, the calm of a few months to the status of a popular and respected world figure.

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The shock of the election result brought the union hierarchy up against reality. As Mr Tom Jackson the postmen's leader predicted, the unions backed up their big pay demands with disputes and the Labour Government paid the price.

The new administration does not seem to fall into the same trap. Quite apart from being doctrinally opposed, the Cabinet recognizes the political impossibility of a wage freeze or a restrictive imposed incomes policy. But union leaders found which unionism abroad which union leaders found difficult to control—even if they wanted to see which parties first were giving real cuts off the Government, or the money market now freed from exchange controls.

The Government has been cheered by the result of the shadow vote at BL, and is to get further encouragement from the CBI, which at its conference last week launched a campaign to reduce the level of pay settlements and raise productivity.

Labour leaders of industry are also busy lobbying their companies from the economic impact of pay strikes. But some are giving in without a fight. Lorries drivers in the Yorkshire area have signed a 20 per cent deal, and some tanker drivers have agreed to give up their pay rises.

The rising tide of wage inflation may yet make the TUC more responsive to the NEDD meetings. For while Mr James Prior's proposal of an "economic forum" where industry, unions and Government meet to share out the nation's income has been temporarily shelved, the NEDD talks could be used to press their familiar arguments against uncontrolled wage inflation.

Such arguments will not cut much ice this time. Settlements

already recorded in the engineering industry, Vauxhall (17 per cent), merchant shipping, and the opening bid in the main industry (15 per cent) are establishing a strong rate that will be difficult to reverse. True, the Department of Employment can (and quickly does) point to the 51 per cent settlement at Talbot motors, the 11 per cent in the fibre-board industry and the 14 per cent in the glass container industry.

But these are relatively small fry. The truth is that Mrs Thatcher's edict that the "limited changes" governing the closed shop, secret ballots and picketing will not change the basic rights of unions. If the unions still feel that these rights were under attack, Mr Prior would be prepared to write in words to say that this was not the Government's intention.

Depending on how this Bill goes down with trade unionists and the country at large, it may not be the last word on trade union law. If the forthcoming legislation works it will be followed by other Bills to improve industrial relations—particularly if the Government can create a climate of opinion in which new law in this field is not automatically regarded as a serious threat to trade union interests.

One vexed issue is holding the final version of Mr Prior's first Bill: the House of Lords case on Daily Express v Macmillan, and the National Union of Journalists to determine the limit of "distance" from the original dispute where sympathetic action may be taken. If the Court of Appeal and Lord Denning are upheld by the Law Lords, some of the contentious matter circumscribing trade union immunities could be dropped from the legislation. If Lord Denning's judgment is overturned, the question of immunities, and how they should be diminished, goes back into the melting pot.

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What use are Shell's mileage marathons?



Roger Lindsay,
Shell Technical Manager.

"The object of Shell's Mileage Marathons is to find out who can travel furthest on a measured amount of fuel. In an event where even the losers turn in spectacular performances, the winners' achievements seem almost miraculous. The record now stands at 2,700 mpg! Last year it was 2,000. But do these astonishing feats contribute anything to the development of your family car?"

The answer is yes. Although they are not test-beds for break-through engineering, to build a winner you have to follow the rules of fuel economy. For the many students who participate, Marathons are a good opportunity to practise the theories learned in the lecture room and laboratory. For experienced engineers, they are an opportunity for discussion and interchange. For the Shell engineers who invented the sport, Mileage Marathons are directly relevant to their research projects, many of which deal with the improvement of fuel economy.

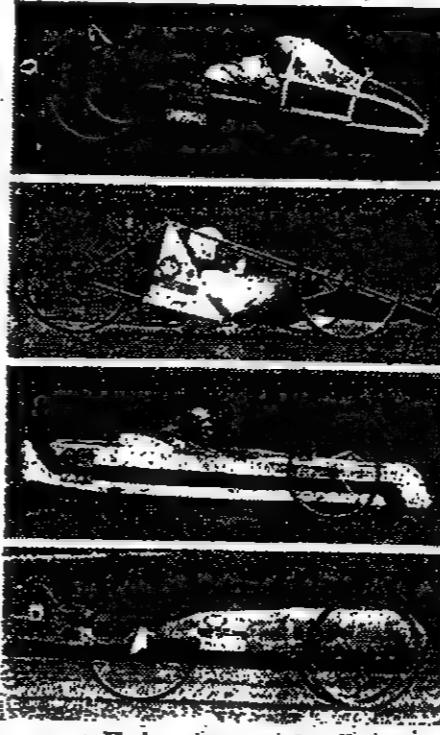
How many miles per gallon for your car?

New developments in car and engine will bring big improvements in fuel consumption, but when and how much? Shell scientists foresee that cars will show a dramatic improvement in mpg over the next few years. Since 1974, some manufacturers have already achieved around 15% improvement.

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At Thornton, near Liverpool, Shell engineers test new engine designs for motor manufacturers. The object is to measure minutely their degree of fuel efficiency over the complete range of driving conditions.

The feedback which Shell gives manufacturers helps to eliminate problems and make improvements. It sounds simple, but the work requires sophisticated measuring equipment and techniques. For example, Shell scientists are developing ways of using laser beams to map the distribution and patterns of turbulence of petrol mixture in the combustion chamber at the precise moment of ignition. Manufacturers will be able to use this information to modify cylinder head shapes and produce improvements in performance.



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Alcohol and alcohol petrol mixtures are now on sale in a few countries and other new fuel components may come along. Shell evaluates the performance of the likely-looking alternatives with a view to stretching oil supplies into the next century.

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Fuel for future internal combustion engines

Most motor manufacturers are trying hard for better fuel consumption. Their work has, however, to take into account the economics of mass production and the requirements of pollution control. Nevertheless, there are considerable advances being made on many fronts. It is part of Shell's job to ensure that fuels advance with engine design.



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THE CRUCIAL DAYS OF TALKS

The Government is now equipped with the necessary instrument to take control of Zimbabwe Rhodesia and lead it to an agreed and internationally acceptable form of independence—but whether these powers will be exercised as planned depends on the decision of the Patriotic Front leaders in the next day or two. If they do not assent, whether specifically or by defaulting on Lord Carrington's deadlines, the new Southern Rhodesia Act will have to deal with a very different situation.

The choice of the Patriotic Front is therefore fatal. If Mr Mugabe and Mr Nkomo reject the framework for a peaceful settlement, they will find themselves committed to a new war for the overthrow of a legal government unhampered by sanctions, and will condemn the Zimbabwe people to more of the torture, mayhem and slaughter which has taken 20,000 lives and is taking thirty lives a day—not to mention the growing hardships inflicted on millions throughout the entire affected region. They will hardly do that lightly. If, however, they agree, and this week commence arrangements for a cease-fire, they commit themselves to testing by the ballot box their claims to be the only representatives of the Zimbabwe people.

The claim and complaint of the Patriotic Front has all along been that there would have been no Lancaster House conference if they had not been winning the guerrilla war. Lord General Wallis is credited with admitting that the Salisbury government cannot militarily win, nor quite the same thing. In their view, their efforts and sacrifices (they discourse ambitions while yet opposing their removal) bought the Bishop and Mr Ian Smith to London. Accordingly they began their arguments ten weeks ago with the demand for almost unconditional surrender to them as emergent victors.

In that ten weeks the very terms of the war have changed. They have found themselves under immense pressure from their indispensable allies, notably Zambia, Tanzania and Mozambique, to choose, after getting

the best possible terms, a ceasefire and elections. They have found themselves outmanoeuvred in negotiation by Lord Carrington, and by Bishop Mugabe's phased concessions to the British (and Lusaka) constitutional requirements—concessions to which Mr Smith has willy nilly made a notable contribution.

Lord Carrington has thus developed a new situation, internationally, which the Patriotic Front can only at great risk to its military effectiveness, if they fight on. This offers hope that they will not do so.

Lord Carrington's achievement in getting so far from the original impasse to near-agreement deserves the highest praise. The earlier inclinations of the incoming Government to cut the Gordian knot by recognising the Mugabe government in the undoubted ground that it satisfied the six principles were translated into a willingness to get Commonwealth agreement upon the guidelines for another "last try" at Lusaka; and from Lusaka Lord Carrington emerged with the authority to devise a British colonial-type solution for an unprecedented non-colonial situation. Thus, for example, the new act provides that a British governor will have brief but absolute power in a territory where there has never been a colonial regime at any stage.

Lord Carrington could not have capitalized on Lusaka if the Bishop had not made such concessions. How great these are, in African terms, is little appreciated in the West. It is a cardinal principle in Africa that one does not give up power before one is forced to do so—which does not necessarily mean to the electorate. The Bishop, who won what a Conservative commission found a fair election, has stood down, after forcing Mr Smith to abandon white safeguards, to British authority. He did so, no doubt, because he reckoned that the Patriotic Front would not emulate him and so leave him Britain's sole heir. Even so the Bishop has taken at least as great as that the Patriotic Front would take by onting for the adjudication of a ballot—perhaps even greater.

A CLOSED SHOP FOR INFORMATION

Every other country among the western democracies is moving towards extending the right of its citizens to have access to official information. Britain alone is moving in the opposite direction. It is already true that on many issues, information about this country can be obtained more easily in the United States than it can here. That does not mean that Britain must necessarily go as far towards open government as the United States has done through its Freedom of Information Act. It is perfectly reasonable and, indeed, on occasion vital to the country's interests for certain kinds of information, both factual and on matters of policy, to be unavailable to the public, and therefore to the press. Such categories of protected information should, however, be carefully and narrowly defined, and there must be safeguards to ensure that the public interest is taken into account when the decision is made to keep the information secret.

The Protection of Information Bill, now before Parliament, meets none of these tests. It is drawn widely, and it gives ministers and civil servants virtually unlimited discretion and decision-making authority without rendering them accountable. If passed in its present form, it would result in a grave threat to the freedom of the press by restricting its ability to investigate and report on subjects of legitimate and often significant public concern.

The Bill is designed to replace section 2 of the Official Secrets Act, 1911, the butt of considerable criticism over the years, the repeal of which was recommended by the Franks Committee in 1972. The section did, however, have the advantage of

being largely ineffective, and it is often a good thing to leave bad alone.

People have not in fact been prevented from revealing what should be disclosed for the, even though section 2 might theoretically allow it. What the Bill does is to exclude those areas of official activity which were anyway never the subject of attention by section 2, and retain for protection all the main areas of sensitivity. Lord Hailsham's boast that the Bill is more liberal than the Franks Committee's recommendation because it does not specifically protect Cabinet papers or information about currency and reserves is hollow—if the Government really wanted to protect Cabinet information it would be easy to fit that kind of information into one of the other categories.

The definitions of defence and international relations in the Bill are as wide as can be imagined. The terms security and intelligence attract no special definition, and can therefore be interpreted as broadly as the Government chooses. What appears on the surface to be a considerable reduction in scope of the "catch-all" section 2, in reality, substitutes a number of new broad offences for the old one.

The disclosure of information or documents on defence or international relations is only made illegal if it "would be likely to cause serious injury to the interests of the nation or endanger the safety of a citizen of the United Kingdom and colonies". But it would be no defence to show the court that those circumstances did not exist, because, as the Bill says later, a ministerial certificate that such a threat of injury to the national interest was likely "shall be conclusive evidence of that fact". No court can go

A YEAR FOR A MINERS' SETTLEMENT

In public, the Government is carefully keeping its eyes averted from the annual negotiations on miners' pay, now approaching their climax. This is less because of natural reluctance to intervene in an area so hateful to its predecessors than because the coal industry represents one of the earliest and most significant test cases for its policy of allowing economic forces to determine the levels of settlements. Coal may be a special case, but it will inevitably affect the range of bargains to follow. Whatever the official posture, ministers must be casting anxious private glances towards the progress of the talks.

The negotiations for this year had, until yesterday been going about their business, without melodrama and with a healthy awareness of the interests that they hold in common. The union entered the bargaining with the high bid which has become customary recently in the industry, seeking increases of up to 65 per cent, and the board replied that cash limits obliged it to offer

and a series of settlements amply acknowledging the union's bargaining power, have kept their earnings comfortably ahead of those of other groups. The terms already on offer would reinforce this position handsomely, without the effort of a strike.

Cash limits are not the only means a government has for influencing the atmosphere of negotiations. Although the industry is experiencing better trends in respect of markets and production than it was a few months ago, its longer term position is sensitive at present. The last government's policy of heavy investment in new capacity to replace the many mines nearing the ends of their lives will not necessarily be accepted wholesale by an administration strongly attracted by the potentialities of nuclear power. Particularly while the whole question of investment in the Belvoir coalfield remains unresolved, both sides need to take careful account of the public impression they create. This is no time for conflict among miners in general appears lukewarm. The incentive scheme introduced a couple of years ago

has not yet been officially endorsed. Yesterday's breakdown must tend to undermine the doctrine of cash limits in wage bargaining, and increases the danger of a major confrontation later in the season. But it does not bring us to the verge of a miners' strike. The appetite for conflict among miners in general appears lukewarm. The incentive scheme introduced a couple of years ago

for

THE TIMES WEDNESDAY NOVEMBER 14 1979

Black defendants and jury vetting

From Mr Leonard Woodley

To the adjudication we must hope that Zimbabwe will soon be committed. It would be an outcome unprecedented in an African conflict. Clearly the process of bringing about a ceasefire will be difficult, less perhaps because of communications in a battered country, than because discipline is so attenuated on the guerrilla side and not always perfect within the security forces.

For these reasons the ceasefire will be frail, until cemented by election results which finally legitimate a black government.

It follows from this and other reasons that British authority will be frail too. The agreements themselves made in Lancaster House with leaderships in Rhodesian conditions, also frail—delay in implementing them will of itself generate questioning and disagreement. These are the arguments for Lord Carrington's apparently uncompromising insistence on an early decision by the Patriotic Front, and for a British presence limited to the shortest period in which an election can take place.

In the present "jury vetting" case at the Central Criminal Court potential jurors were investigated by the prosecution, not in open court, but in a most unhealthy and clandestine manner.

In rejecting the defence submission that the vetting of jurors was an improper gathering of information, the learned judge said: "It was a right to investigate jurors in a limited range of cases but not for the purpose of electing a biased jury, but in the hope of getting an unbiased jury". In order to justify his decision the judge went on to tell one of the defence counsel: "Your client would not like it if the local chairman of the National Front appeared on the jury."

All the defendants are white. It is precisely for the purpose of obtaining an unbiased jury that counsel for black defendants have in a limited range of cases made the perfectly reasonable application stated above.

Since I believe that justice must not only be done but be seen to be done, I am forced to conclude that this unhealthy development of jury vetting means that there now exists in this country one law for the prosecution and another for the defence.

Yours faithfully,
LEONARD WOODLEY,
2 Paper Buildings, EC4.
November 9.

Blockley via Timbuctoo

From Sir Robert Lusty

Sir, During the distressing prolongation of your illness the Post Office has continued, with more immunity than usual, the deployment of its knavish tricks.

It would I think be presumptuous to assume that this area of the north Cotswolds has been singled out for its malice, but we were recently informed that, from a certain date, we would come within the telephone jurisdiction of Evesham. The name of Blockley would disappear from every directory and we would all be accorded Evesham numbers.

There is no discernible animosity here against Evesham. It is a friendly enough place, but it is some 15 or so miles away and in a different county. We are a working community, not only with shops and businesses, but surviving successfully to establish a small trading estate to which inquiries and requests will increasingly come from far and wide.

Many will want to know where Blockley is and would assume from any telephone directory that it is close to Evesham. Our neighbouring Chipping Campden was subjected to a similar indignity some time ago and succumbed. Our immediate protest was perhaps more vehement, for a respite has been accorded us.

The principle of all this is not unimportant and it must be widespread in its threatened application. It implies a surrender, not to the requirements of any siliconic technological innovation, but to the paternalistic reluctance of the Post Office to spend a bit more on its directories.

We do not mind if our calls are routed via Timbuctoo. It is the retention of our name, with its topographical indications, in directories and on newspaper which is important. It is much to be hoped that all localities similarly threatened by telephonic extinction will rebel.

Yours faithfully,
ROBERT LUSTY,
The Old Silk Mill,
Blockley,
Moreton-in-Marsh,
Gloucestershire.

Winged portent

From Mr Strahan Soames

Sir, While you have been away somewhere the cuckoo has come and gone; but I write to inform you that at about 12.30 pm on Monday, October 15, while sailing my dinghy, Alchemy, from Emsworth to East Head, my crew and I heard and then saw a small flock of Brent geese on the south shore of Thorney Island to the east of Marker Point: they were the first that we had seen this winter.

These geese by 10 Chichester Harbour from various Arctic shores at the beginning of each winter, judging their moment to move from the cold to the comparative warmth. As you, Sir, have recently undertaken a comparable journey I felt that you might gain comfort from the news of the arrival of the coincident geese.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,
STRATHAN SOAMES,
Tower Quay,
Emsworth,
Hampshire,
October 31.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The language of Common Prayer

From the Principal of St Hugh's College, Oxford, and others

Sir, Some of the signatories of this letter also signed the petition which was presented last week to the General Synod. But we thought it right to address our arguments to a wider public as well.

It is becoming increasingly hard to find a church where the Authorized Version of the Bible and the Book of Common Prayer are used in main services. This, we think, is a matter for concern, whatever the merits of experimental services, since there is a manifest danger to new generations of clergy, laity and laymen who, prior to religious belief, being cut off from the vital linguistic source which have animated and enriched our common culture.

The undersigned, some professing Christians, some not, are united in the belief that this is not a simple issue between a beautiful archaic language and its accessibility to present day hearers. The full meaning of the Bible cannot be conveyed by offering it in such terms the Church inevitably deprives believers and the community at large of a spiritual dimension in which society has lived for four centuries.

We acknowledge that there is no difficulty in which the western world has been more thoroughly enough understood to show either that the west has been abused or the extent to which it is abused. Besides the Government is making the naive and even perhaps mischievous assumption that all arranged marriages are marriages of convenience. Furthermore the Government's policy presupposes that the entry clearance officer is endowed with the "supernatural power of detecting a case of abuse" even before it has occurred.

As for the Government's second reason, it is difficult to see how allowing the fiancées and husbands to settle increased primary immigration. Of course it slightly increases the number of immigrants in the sense that a certain number of males are allowed to enter Britain. However, it is totally misleading and even irresponsible to say that this is a "stepping stone over which other members" of his family or village may pass". The existing restrictions on entry of parents and distressed relatives are so severe that the husband allowed to settle is virtually unable to bring in anyone else.

As for the third argument, nothing can reassure those who find the very presence of the Asians an anathema. Racism and xenophobia are inherently irresistible. One concession increases the appetite for another and a climate for good race relations cannot be created by allaying the fears of one section of the community at the expense of another.

Whilst the advantages of the proposed ban are minor and hypothetical its harmful effects are potent and certain. First, on the basis of perhaps a few cases of abuse, the Government denigrates the character of the entire Asian community. A community which cherishes the honour of the family and the integrity of its marriage is accused of cynically using marriages as devices for circumventing the immigration laws and its marriage arrangements are subjected to the scrupulous and judgment of those least equipped to do so.

Second, the Government's proposal either a form of repatriation or a form of cultural genocide. It leaves an Asian girl with two alternatives: either to return to the sub-continent for good, which is a form of induced repatriation, or to marry outside their community and therefore lose partially or wholly their cultural identity. If this is what the Government intends, it should say so, rather than use its immigration policy to achieve unacceptable objectives.

Third, a law that requires a large number of exceptions and calls for extensive executive discretion violates the basic principles of the rule of law. The Government's immigration proposal, on the Home Secretary's own admission, can only be administered by exempting large categories of women and considering their cases "sympathetically for favourable treatment outside the rules".

As Edmund Burke said: "A law which is mean, pointless, harmless, divisive and directed against a specific section of society is inherently repulsive and cannot deserve to find a place on the statute book of a free society."

Yours faithfully,
RACHEL TRICKETT,
BLAKE,
TREND,

BASIL MITCHELL,

JOHN CAREY,

PETER STRAWSON,

IRIS MURDOCH,

MICHAEL GEARIN-TOSE,

BRIAN WILSON,

MARY WARNOCK.

Oxford,
November 12.

218
128
119
91
90
89
71
69
52

The subjects of the letters could also be classified into broad categories, of which 88 in all were recorded. Their relative positions were reckoned both by number of letters and by their length. First on both counts came international affairs (including foreign and Commonwealth affairs, but not EEC), the only subject to evoke over 300 letters. The order of the rest varied somewhat according to whether the count is by numbers or by length; but in the following table of the first fifteen positions by number, the only omissions necessary if length were the criterion would be press and conservation (equal 15), which would be replaced by nuclear policy.

The table shows the number of letters, and in brackets the number of column inches.

International affairs	311
Arts	283 (1,097)
Politics	278 (1,226)
Church affairs	234 (1,197)
Legal matters	191 (953)
Environmental planning	179 (847)
Education	142 (634)
Transport	137 (336)
Economy	133 (739)
Policy	125 (628)
Human rights	116 (593)
Medical	112 (605)
EEC	85 (460)
Conservation	79 (381)
Press	79 (399)

The longest letter published in the year occupied 27.3 column inches, and the shortest, 0.1 column inches.

Yours faithfully,
R. J. E. TAYLOR,

177 Fairfax Road,

Teddington,

Middlesex.

218
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119
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52

Among other things, the fourth channel should offer a real opportunity to focus attention on issues that the other channels can treat only briefly or irregularly. Not at least among these is the relationship between the rich and poor countries. Just a year ago a government survey showed, to a disturbing degree, the extent of ignorance, misconception and injustice which exists in Britain about this relationship.

The leading organizations in the field of development education in Britain have now written to the chairman of the Independent Broadcasting Authority proposing that a significant amount of time on the fourth channel be allocated to programmes promoting an understanding of the interdependence of the developed and the developing world.

We believe that this imaginative proposal should be welcomed and incorporated in the forthcoming draft for legislation.

Yours faithfully,

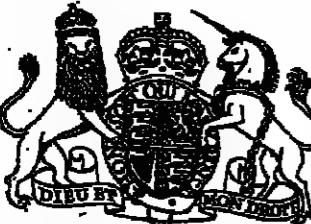
DONALD CANTUAR:

JUDITH HART

JACK JONES

BERNARD BRAINE.

RICHARD HOGGART.



COURT CIRCULAR

BUCKINGHAM PALACE

Movement. The President of

the Republic of Indonesia and

Madame Tien Soeharto arrived

in London today to pay a visit to

The Queen and The Duke of

Edinburgh at Buckingham Palace.

The President and Madame

Soeharto arrived at Gatwick Air-

port, London, by air.

The following are the names of

the Suite in attendance:

Excellency Dr Widjojo Nitisastro

(Minister Co-ordinator for

Economy, Finance and Industry

and Chairman of the National

Development Planning Agency)

Excellency Dr Rusli Noor

(Minister State Secretary)

Excellency Mr Soeharmo

(Minister of Foreign Affairs)

Excellency Mr Angus Ogilvy

and the Hon Angus

Ogilvy, accompanied by His

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THE TIMES BUSINESS NEWS

■ Stock markets
FT Ind 423.5 up 10.5
FT Gilts 65.86 up 0.55
■ Sterling
S2.1055 down 50 pence
Index 68.0 unchanged
■ Dollar
Index 87.7 unchanged
■ Gold
\$387.5 down \$6
■ 3-month money
Inter-bank 154 to 155 Euro \$ 154 to 155

IN BRIEF

Avery puts forward terms to beat GEC offer

In Avery's formal rejection of the GEC bid, shareholders are promised a 68 per cent dividend increase to 21.4p gross in the current year. The shares, down 6p to 244p, yield 8 per cent prospectively on the GEC offer price of 265p.

Avery's directors also forecast a 10 per cent increase in trading profit in the present year, despite the engineering strike.

However, Warburg, GEC's advisers, last night described the document as "predictable and confusing" saying that the "entirely defensive" dividend increase was uncovered on a current cost basis.

Chrysler shortfall

Mr Gerald Greenwald, vice-president of Chrysler Corporation, said in Washington, "no banks have yet offered to provide any of the new credits Chrysler needs to qualify for matching Federal loan guarantees."

Chrysler's technical rally

became more feeble. The volume of business was small.

Comment in the press also helped to send long-dated gilt-edged prices back to a strong bear position in long gilt.

The real excitement was in long gilt. There is a wide spread realising that yields on longs are as high as they are likely to go, and institutional money, hitherto on the sidelines, began moving in to take advantage of these returns.

NatWest's move sets lead in rise to unprecedented borrowing levels

By Ronald Pollen
Banking Correspondent

The cost of borrowing is now set to rise to unprecedented levels of more than 20 per cent for some customers following National Westminster Bank's initiative yesterday.

NatWest, second largest bank in the United Kingdom, but significantly the one with the biggest domestic business, increased its base lending rate from 14.5% to 15% per cent with effect from the close of business today.

This is the highest level on record and means that big industrial borrowers will be paying 15% per cent for their money while the cost of overdrafts for personal customers will rise to between 18% and 20% per cent. NatWest has also raised the rate it pays on deposits from 11.5% to 13% per cent, which makes the building society's investment rate of 12.5 per cent gross increasingly uncompetitive.

There was no other immediate response from the other big high street banks, who appeared reluctant to push by industrial concerns to

interest rates into this new high ground and, in any case, were awaiting the expected monetary package and the foreshadowed rise in minimum lending rate on Thursday.

There is still some doubt in banking circles about the size of the increase in MLR and the banks do not want to be forced to make two changes in base rate if MLR goes up more than the 1% to 2 points anticipated.

NatWest explained that the rate increase was necessary to meet the pressure on money market rates, on which they largely depend to finance their lending.

These have risen to almost 16 per cent in recent days and three months inter-bank rate eased to 15% per cent yesterday.

There also seems to have been pressure on NatWest from the practice of "round-tripping" whereby industrial companies can borrow from their bank and return the money at a higher rate in the money market. This seems to be borne out by the recent increase in the use of overdrafts by industrial concerns to

interest rates into this new high ground and, in any case, were awaiting the expected monetary package and the foreshadowed rise in minimum lending rate on Thursday.

The other clearing banks

they have not been so affected by this because interest rates at the short end have not made it worth while.

It is unlikely that the clearing banks will be able to stay out of line on base rates for the length of time as they did, for example, in October, 1976, when MLR was raised to a then record level of 15% per cent.

With the "corset" in operation, any big customer who switched his borrowing from one bank to another would force a bank to go into the money markets to fund this extra business and boost its interest-bearing liabilities.

The pressure on interest rates has heightened this week following last week's worse than expected bank lending figures. This is likely to be translated into a 2 per cent increase in the money supply figures to be announced on Thursday and, in the past few days both the Prime Minister and the Chancellor have reaffirmed their

stance on monetary targets.

The Government is expected to announce a fresh set of targets for the growth of the money supply on Thursday, along with a rise in MLR and a tightening of the "corset" controls on the banks.

A general rise in interest rates has already been largely discounted in the gilt-edged market. Short gilts rose slightly yesterday and longs were 5% higher. Speculative buying led to some strong purchasing of sterling yesterday morning but this petered out later on in the day. Gilt receipts, in October, helped push the building society level of 11.915m up even after withdrawals of 554m, announced yesterday, are among the industry's best. However, the figure is expected to drop back to around 1330m to 1400m this month and be lower still in December, far short of the 1550m a month now reckoned as necessary to meet current mortgage demand.

Financial Editor, page 17

Gilts jump on Thatcher inflation pledge

By Peter Wainwright

The FT index rose 10.5 to 423.5 yesterday after long-dated gilt-edged prices had also increased sharply on Monday's budgetary announcements from Mrs Thatcher and Sir Geoffrey Howe, the Chancellor, to fight inflation.

Press comment played its part in the rise, which at one time put the FT index 13.8 ahead. The best, however, was over by 3pm when the technical rally

became more feeble. The volume of business was small.

Comment in the press also helped to send long-dated gilt-edged prices sharply higher.

The real excitement was in long gilt. There is a wide spread realising that yields on longs are as high as they are likely to go, and institutional money, hitherto on the sidelines, began moving in to take advantage of these returns.

Plessey sells Garrard to Brazilian company

By Andrew Goodrick-Clarke
Financial Editor

Plessey is effectively withdrawing from consumer electronics by selling its Garrard record-changer and music centre business to Gradiante Electronic, a Brazilian group.

The Brazilian will pay only £1m in cash for Garrard, a leading name in British electronics, but the sale will rid Plessey of losses which have totalled nearly £12m during the past five years.

Although compulsion is today, Garrard's remaining 580 employees at Swindon were told last night that Gradiante would maintain the plant and that their jobs were safe.

This is the second significant recent disposal of consumer interests by a British electronics company. Decca has just said that it is selling much of its recording and music publishing business to Polygram, which is jointly owned by Philips, the Dutch group, and Siemens of West Germany. Together with the Seimens, the sale from Thorn, these deals reflect the turmoil taking place in the British electronics business.

Garrard was first a victim of savage Japanese competition in international markets for consumer electronics, and more recently the strength of sterling which undermined its competitive position in export markets, notably North America.

At its peak in 1973 Garrard, which was acquired by Plessey in 1960, employed 4,000. A year ago Plessey carried out restructuring at Garrard involving the closure of one Swindon plant and 1,200 redundancies. That cost Plessey £15m, and the sale announced last night will cost the "British" electronics group a further £4.5m, because of some exceptional write-offs in 1979-80 accounts.

Gradiante, based in São Paulo, has five Brazilian factories, one in Mexico. It makes a range of hi-fi equipment, last year worth £35m. Last night Mr E. Gruber, Gradiante's president, said that in his view, the National Iranian Oil Company has been asking for prices of hi-fi equipment was over.



Iran turns away first US tankers

By Nicholas Hirst

Oil workers at Iran's Kharb Island terminal have begun to turn away tankers about to load oil for delivery to the United States.

President Carter's decision to ban all exports of Iranian crude oil and petroleum products in retaliation for the holding of hostages in the United States embassy in Iran and the subsequent decision of the Iranian Revolutionary Council to ban exports to the United States has added new confusion to worldwide oil markets.

It will be between six and eight weeks before the United States suffers any real hit. It will be allowed to complete oil deliveries. The problem for the oil industry will be to rearrange its tanker schedules to divert those bound for Iran for United States. Iran for United States to other suppliers and replace them with tankers delivering crude to other countries.

A large part of the 700,000 barrels a day of Iranian exports which suddenly found their way to the United States last night were £35m. Last night Mr E. Gruber, Gradiante's president, said that in his view, the National Iranian Oil Company has been asking for prices of hi-fi equipment was over.

Exxon had a contract for 70,000 barrels a day from Iran equal to one-and-a-half per cent

more than \$40 a barrel, compared to the official Opec ceiling price of \$23.50 set by the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries.

The general uncertainty is expected to put further pressure on prices on Monday. Indonesia, regarded as a moderate Opec member, was reported to be increasing its prices by 11 per cent by the end of the week.

In New York oil company executives at the annual meeting of the American Petroleum Institute generally supported the President's stand.

Stocks in the United States of all products are relatively high. If Iran cut exports barrel for barrel with the American ban there should still not be any important shortages. Mr Clinton G. Garvin, chairman of Exxon in the world, said that the country could adjust. Heating oil stocks were now considerably higher than last year.

The industry should have no problem in arranging "swap" deals to meet the shortfall in United States supplies. Iranian oil accounts for three-and-a-half per cent of consumption if it is called on to do so.

Exxon had a contract for 70,000 barrels a day from Iran equal to one-and-a-half per cent

more than \$40 a barrel, compared to the official Opec ceiling price of \$23.50 set by the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries.

For traditionalists, there are some consoling features. The original Wallasey machines, designed and built by the late Mr Charles Wilfrid Hewitt, the firm's founder, are being crated and sent to Huddersfield for use in the new factory. The name of Hewitt and Booth is being retained because of its worldwide reputation in the tobacco trade.

And Mr Beattie, a non-smoker, will be acting as a consultant while also writing a history of the firm which he joined as a boy straight from school. He says: "Like everything else, there is foreign competition to contend with now. They are making pipe cleaners in Taiwan in a new factory in West Kildonan."

But now the Wallasey factory is being run down. Only 12 workers remain, and production has fallen to 800,000 pipe cleaners a week. Hewitt and Booth has merged with John L. Eriksen, a Yorkshire competitor, and next month, production will be concentrated on a new factory in West Kildonan.

Among the final orders going out from Merseyside will be five

Break-even target fades as British Steel revises forecasts

By Peter Hill

British Steel has revised downward its forecasts of demand for steel in the current financial year.

The revision, which indicates a drop of about 1 million tonnes on demand over the first six months, will further exacerbate the corporation's attempt to break even by the end of the financial year.

Forecasts now indicate the demand could be down to just over 7 million tonnes for the six month period. They reflect a weakening demand among the main steel-consuming industries entering a period of further recession, and the running-down of stocks.

Last year the corporation produced more than 8 million tonnes of steel, well below its capacity—and the signs are that this year production will fall below that level. Even more worrying for the BSC board is the fact that no significant upturn is apparent, demand for big volume products is falling away.

The consequences for the corporation's finances will be considered at a board meeting later this month. Over the past month, the corporation announced the closure of iron and steel-making at two big plants, Shotton and Corby, and at a number of smaller units involving the loss of 15,000 jobs.

These closures are designed to phase out loss-making and

excess capacity, while bringing on-stream new facilities, but there is now little chance of breaking even financially.

The target was set nearly two years ago and was underlined in July by Sir Keith Joseph, the new Secretary of State for Industry, when he declared that the corporation would be aiming to operate at a profit after providing for interest and depreciation.

At this month's board meeting directors will be told that the loss for the half year was close to the forecast of £150m.

The corporation's executives have told Whitehall that, although they consider it is vital to have a financial objective, it will become increasingly difficult to meet the deadline laid down by the Government.

The aftermath of the closure plan for Corby and Shotton still pose difficulties. Last week, delegates from the National Craftsmen's Co-ordinating Committee will meet in Shotton to decide whether to go ahead and plunge the industry into chaos.

The delegates will be considering a call by the Iron and Steel Trades Confederation for selective strikes, a one-day national steel strike and an overtime ban, as a protest against the ending of steel-making at Corby.

Uphill fight for ASC on supervision of standards

By Adrienne Gleeson

The Accounting Standards Committee is running up against opposition in its attempts to get the Council for the Securities Industry to help in setting and supervising the implementation of accounting standards.

Publication of the ASC's report on the setting of accounting standards is likely to be held up while the committee tries to induce members of the CSI to agree to help.

Mr Tom Watts, chairman of the ASC, and a partner in Price Waterhouse, said yesterday that although representatives of some organisations in the CSI accepted the idea, they should be represented on the body setting and supervising standards.

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The ASC's report on the setting of accounting standards is likely to be held up while the committee tries to induce members



CBI could decide to base new strike fund in offshore tax haven

By Patricia Tindall
A decision as to whether to base the proposed employers' strike fund in the United Kingdom or whether to opt for an offshore tax haven is likely to be taken tomorrow at a meeting of the Confederation of British Industry's steering group headed by Sir Alex Jarrett.

The meeting is the first to be held since the CBI's national conference confounded the sceptics last week by voting overwhelming support for the principle of employer solidarity.

The vote, together with background support from members, has given the steering group a green light to work out final details with a view to setting up a test market within the next few months.

The main question to be settled is the formation of a company along conventional insurance lines which would work out the risk ratings and hence the likely premiums for participating members.

The steering group envisages that the company would be formed by members and would consist of perhaps only 15 or 20, who could draw up a ques-

tionnaire on which rating assessments would be based. It would also be responsible for handling claims.

The overall aim is that the scheme should be as simple as possible so that payments could be made speedily. For ease of operation, as well as fear of criticism, the group would prefer a United Kingdom base for the fund. But this has to be balanced against the tax advantages of an offshore location, such as the Cayman Islands, the Isle of Man or the Channel Islands.

The group will hear a report from a working party consisting of the five broking companies: Gault, Armstrong & Kemble, Hogg, Robinson, Bowring, Sedgwick, Forbes and Willis, Faber & Dumas.

The intention is that the scheme should offer CBI members the option of coverage for "knock-on" effects of strikes within, for instance, suppliers or within separately insured units of a company group. Also, there would be cover for industrial action in the insured company itself.

Work is specifically being carried out to see if employers

Downturn forecast for US economy

The United States must expect a sharp downturn in economic activity next year, accompanied by a continued high level of inflation in the organization for Economic Co-operation and Development reported yesterday.

In its annual report on the United States economy, the OECD forecast that real gross national product would fall at a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 13 per cent next year with a particularly sharp decline of 3 per cent in the first half.

The unemployment rate would mount in an average of 7 per cent over 1980 from 5.2 per cent this year while inflation at about 9 per cent would remain high by historic standards.

The Paris-based body made clear that there is little scope for the United States authorities to introduce expansionary policy measures in present circumstances. The United States was experiencing a difficult but necessary period of adjustment designed to bring lower rates of inflation, a longer external payments position and patterns of energy production and consumption in line with today's oil supply situation. In terms of policy, top priority has to be given to reducing inflation.

The OECD's report underlined that combatting inflation would be no easy task. In particular it drew attention to the risk that wages, which so far this year have lagged behind price rises, could catch up and so trigger a wage-price spiral.

The report said that it must be a major objective of policy to bring the catch-up in wages in line with the rise in pay guidelines and planned involvement of organized labour in the administration's anti-inflation programme. It also suggested that the administration might revive plans for a tax-related incomes policy designed to guarantee the individuals' real wage. Such a real wage-insurance scheme was proposed by the Carter administration in October last year but later rejected by Congress.

However, even if the administration succeeds in preventing a catch-up in wages, the OECD warned that the decline in inflation would be modest to start with, rising to just one per cent from the 13 per cent rate forecast for 1980. And the long-term prospects for a further deceleration in the medium term "are much less optimistic".

On other fronts the report made rather happier reading. The policy initiatives undertaken by the administration in Washington are expected to stabilize United States dependence on imported oil. Net imports are expected to be held at 7.9 million barrels per day in the period up to 1985, compared with the 1978 level of 7.7 million barrels a day. In addition a significant improvement in the United States current account balance of payments is expected. At a seasonally adjusted annual rate, a deficit of \$500m in the first half of next year should turn into a surplus of \$5.75bn.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

A new title for engineers

From Dr R. Feinberg

Sir, The Sir Monty Finniston inquiry into the engineering profession has come up with some excellent proposals to control the quality of engineering professionals in Britain. However, the proposed registration title of "Qualified Engineer" has some serious shortcomings from the public relations point of view as follows:

• The public will not get to see the title very often because it will be shortened to Engineer in everyday use. For example, no one in practice is likely to say that he or she is a Qualified Electrical Engineer but rather he or she is an Electrical Engineer.

• As the members of the general public know that an engineer is a person who maintains engines or other technical equipments, they will naturally assume that a qualified engineer

is a qualified maintenance of engines or other technical equipments.

For effective public relations purposes a two-word title as "Qualified Engineers" is not satisfactory and, if real we need to use the one-word, internationally recognized title for engineers professionals, namely

"Ingenieur" (pronounced in the "er" sense). Such a one-word title would get everyday use (for example, electrical engineer) and would instantly identify the holder as an engineering professional once the title is established.

Thus all engineering professionals in Britain would be able to build their own professional image around their own title of "Ingenieur" during their everyday working and social lives.

Also the professional engineering institutions would be able

to tell the general public that an engineer is a person who invents and designs, plans and manages technological projects, and the public would not confuse him or her with the one who maintains engines or other technical equipments.

The use of the title Ingenieur would also tend to remind people that engineering professionals use ingenuity while applying technology and science for the benefit of society.

"Ingenieur" (The Times, May 10, 1971) is the anglicized version of "Ingenieur". Would anyone interested in this matter please let me know which of the two versions is preferred.

Yours faithfully,
R. FEINBERG,
3 Depleach Road,
Cheshire SK8 1DZ,
November 12.

Abolition of exchange controls

From Mr Jasper Rootham

Sir, Exchange Control was abolished before the disappearance of The Times. Good news does not come by halves. Two of my chiefs at the Bank of England were Sir George Bolton (unwilling architect of this invasion of freedom because it was an essential weapon of war), and Raymond Kershaw.

As a younger man I became involved in the middle 1960's in the official, formally responsible for, among other things, the operation of exchange controls. I believe they would confirm what I am going to say.

Exchange control is, in a free

society, ineffective in peace-time because if you must really close the net you need first censorship of the mail and second, suspension of the freedom of the seas. Both these requirements applied during the war but not after it.

Exchange control is a gross encroachment on personal freedom which we fought in 1939 to preserve, and I challenge opponents of its demise who also claim to be lovers of freedom. It drove the contrary. I still remember lapidary remarks of both men during the great debate in the early 1950s about whether the pound sterling should be allowed to

"float" on the foreign exchanges something which only happened 20 years too late.

Holton said "punt is a poor counsellor", and Kershaw added "sterling begins at home". If we order our own financial affairs bravely, but with an eye to distasteful facts, we have nothing to fear from the abolition of exchange control since it is a shackles struck off, and one free man is worth 10 slaves.

JASPER ROOTHAM,
Crag House,
Wall,
Hexham,
Northumberland NE46 4HA
November 12.

FORECASTS FOR THE BRITISH ECONOMY

	Year 1980/Year 1979					1st half 1980/1st half 1979	NIESR Treasury	
	NIERS	LBS	US	CE	ST	(% change between years unless otherwise stated)	(% change between periods unless otherwise stated)	
Gross domestic product	0.5	-6.4	0.4	-1.3	-0.9	-1.3	0.5	-1.0
Inflation	13.8	14.1	16.1	16.4	13.2	17.2	10.6*	13.5*
Unemployment (000)	1,610*	1,551	1,598	1,500	1,650	1,460	1,610*	1,610*
Consumer spending	1.9	2.0	0.6	-0.9	0.7	-1.1	1.0	-1.0
Private investment inc.								
housebuilding	0	-2.8	4.7	-0.8	-0.8	-0.8	0.5	-0.5
public investment inc.								
housebuilding	0	-6.6	-1.3	-10.3	-0.9	-7.8	-2.2	-4.5
public authorities' consumption	-1.3	-2.2	-0.5	-1.1	0.5	0.7	-1.0	-2.5
Stockbuilding (£m 1976 prices)	-142	-26	-48	-50	0.2	-120	-28	-35*
Exports	3.0	3.5	2.5	2.5	2.9	3.2	3.5	5.5
Imports	1.0	0.3	0.1	-0.4	-0.4	1.5	-1.5	-1.0
Balance of payments								
deficit (-) Year 1980 2m	400	-880	1,200	-2,000	200	-200	11	11
PSBR (£m fiscal 1979-80)	8,800	8,500	8,000	8,000	8,500	8,400	8,800	8,250
Money supply (M3 fiscal 1979-80)	11	8.5	12.0	12.5	9.5	9.5	11	8

NIESR: National Institute of Economic and Social Research; LBS: London Business School; HG: Hoare Govett; CE: Cambridge Econometrics; ST: St. James's Gregory; published in *Economist*, P. D. Phillips and Drew; *: fourth-quarter 1980; **: fourth-quarter 1980; ***: third-quarter 1979; ****: corporation's fixed investment; ^: stockbuilding as % gross; ^: second-quarter 1980 on second-quarter 1979.

Forecasts for GDP components are in constant prices.

* The private forecasts assume policy changes. For details readers should refer to original sources. Categories in different forecasts are not completely comparable, but differences are minor. Differences in result also reflect differences in assumptions, model constructions and data at which work performed. The month in which work was published is given in brackets. Forecasts published by the Treasury twice yearly; NIESR, CE and ST: four times a year; LBS: three times a year; HG and P & D: revise their forecasts every month.

VAT change threat to construction

By John Hartley

The changes now being considered by the Government would threaten the very existence of many construction companies, the Treasury has been warned.

Industrial leaders say in a letter to the Chancellor that grave damage would be caused if repayments of value added tax were to be made quarterly, rather than monthly, as at present.

Abolition of monthly repayments is one of a number of changes in the arrangements for collecting and repaying VAT by Customs and Excise being considered as part of the campaign to cut Civil Service costs.

The vast majority of construction companies, about 83,000, are repayment traders, according to Mr John Allen, president of the National Federation of Building Trade Employers. Almost all have opted for and receive monthly repayments.

The amount of money involved is so great that abolition of monthly repayments would strangle the industry's cash flow and threaten the very existence of many companies, Mr Allen explained.

With standard rates of VAT set at 15 per cent, it is estimated that VAT repayments to construction companies is about £500m a year, £200m of which is lost in interest.

"We cannot emphasize too strongly that the change would have exceptionally grave and damaging consequences for our industry," says Mr Allen.

Colin said yesterday there was no question of applications being made for Government financial aid.

The Labour Government feared that a Mitsubishi assembly plant in South Wales, with the corporation's cash flow and the very existence of many companies.

The latest SMIT figures show that in October Mitsubishi imported 64 car-derived vans, bringing the total so far this year to 873. Importers generally capture 25.1 per cent of the United Kingdom market, compared with 21.5 per cent last October, and have taken 23.3 per cent of the market during the first 10 months of the year.

The industry is seeking urgent action against fibre imports from the United States, whose producers benefit from artificially low energy and feedstock prices. It also wants the package of controls introduced under the Multi-Fibre Arrangement (MFA) applied more strictly and consistently.

Nederland-Spannerij was formed over a year ago by the merger of 12 spinning units and is 45 per cent owned by the Netherlands government. According to industry sources, they lost about £1m in 1978.

Newsprint price will soon rise £10 a tonne

By Edward Townsend

Newsprint prices in the United Kingdom are almost certain to rise by at least £10 per tonne, say in the New Year. This would add about £13m to domestic publishing costs for 1980.

The Nordic producers who, with the Canadians, supply about three-quarters of Britain's newsprint needs, have been hit hard by currency fluctuations and intend at least to recover losses caused by inflation. Next year, newsprint could be as high as £12 per tonne.

Swedish and Finnish producers are keen to implement the rise on January 1 but the more profitable Canadian mill owners, with lower power and wood costs and less affected by the rising value of sterling, may postpone the increase for a few months.

Mr M. A. Petham, managing director of the United Kingdom end of Consolidated-Bathurst, one of the big Canadian mill owners, said yesterday that the increase would be imposed by next April at the latest. He hoped it "will see us through until the end of 1980".

Currently, newsprint contracts have invariably played havoc with the traditional price stability. Contractors have been offered rebates for each tonne that the United States dollar weakens against the pound, thus the United Kingdom and Nordic producers, whose currency is stronger than the dollar, have been at a disadvantage compared with the Canadians.

Domestic producers have been hardest hit by the rise in paper prices. A recent report by Pricewaterhouse Phillips and Drew suggested that largely through increasing imports, United Kingdom paper output could fall by 10 per cent next year.

Commons call to limit fibre imports

Textile industry leaders and MPs from both sides of the House of Commons yesterday demanded greater European Commission to take stronger action to restrict the cheap flow of imports into the Community.

In a Commons debate, low-prices from a variety of sources were cited as a major cause of the difficulties faced by the textile industry, which has shed several thousand jobs in the past six months.

The industry is seeking urgent action against fibre imports from the United States, whose producers benefit from artificially low energy and feedstock prices. It also wants the package of controls introduced under the Multi-Fibre Arrangement (MFA) applied more strictly and consistently.

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The commission was later convinced that the assistance was linked to the rationalization and reduction of Dutch productive capacity, and objections were withdrawn.

Mr Paul A. Volcker, chairman of the Federal Reserve Board, claimed it was possible for the Federal Reserve Board to achieve its monetary growth targets by the end of the year without creating a "credit crunch".

However, interest rates would not be substantially reduced until the inflation rate had declined. The overall performance of the economy would be the primary factor.

The United States would continue to consult its major trading partners to see that economic policy did not move in mutually damaging directions.

Dutch union claims

Workers in the Netherlands will be looking for a real wage increase of 2 per cent in forthcoming negotiations, said the Federatie Nederlandse Vakbeweging, the largest labour confederation in Holland.

BY THE FINANCIAL EDITOR

NatWest jumps the gun

Reassurance from the Prime Minister and the Chancellor on the Government's commitment to contain monetary growth brought sharp rallies in both equities and gilt yesterday. In the gilt market, buyers came in mainly on the thought that the Government Broker could run out the "tap" stocks extremely rapidly in the wake of adequate monetary measures tomorrow.

In the equity market the jitters clearly played a considerable part in the 10.5 rise in the FT Index to 423.5. Although the index was 13.8 higher in early afternoon, the forecast one-third increase in the dividend for the year at least pushes the prospective yield to a more reasonable 4.5 per cent.

Meanwhile, the rise in money market interest rates finally became irresistible yesterday for National Westminster which jumped the gun of the expected increase in minimum lending rate tomorrow and raised its base rate 13 points to 15.4 per cent.

NatWest is taking something of a gamble that MLR does not rise 2 points or more since with inter-bank money still costing 15.4 per cent last night and reserve assets and special deposits adding another 1 per cent to the cost of money, this 1 per cent margin over base rate for blue chip companies would leave NatWest exposed if there are any surprises tomorrow.

With make-up day for the banking system only a week away, the other banks are chary of upsetting their books by perhaps needing to make a couple of changes to their base rates and for the present are not altering their base rates.

For clearing bank shares the rise in base rates will not make much difference to their profitability this year with only a month-and-a-half to go to their year-ends and NatWest at least has sweetened the pill with a full 2 point increase in deposit rates.

The sector has improved by nearly a tenth relative to the rest of the market over the last week as the prospect of a sustained fall in interest rates expected to bite fairly soon in 1980 has been pushed back. The market, however, has never been all that impressed with the quality of these "endowment" profits and the move to higher commission charges recently initiated by Lloyds is a stronger pull point.

Forecasts for full-year profits then will be raised slightly, to perhaps 30 per cent over the second-half last year which should produce some fizz in the shares over the results season but longer-term the cycle is now moving against the sector.

Smiths Industries

A way to ride the recession

Smiths Industries looks as good a way as any of riding the forthcoming engineering recession—and the stock market knows it. An 8.1 per cent yield at 172p (the shares gained 6p yesterday after a comfortable 14 per cent gain to 225.1p) compares well with some of the horror ratings to be found elsewhere in the engineering and industrial sectors.

Of course, Smiths will be damaged by the effect of the engineering workers' strike, but last year it demonstrated the strengths which should have meant that it has been hurt less badly than many others. Its aerospace business, even allowing for strike damage in 1977-78 did exceptionally well on the back of splendid order books which show no sign of weakening while its medical and electronics business, which reflect a large overseas content, also did well.

And in areas where there are problems—notably motor components—Smiths is grasping the nettle, a £2.5m provision during 1978-79 for reorganization and restructuring costs to come, reflecting the group's view that the difficulties of the British motor industry are fundamental and need to be treated as such.

However, Smiths has plenty of scope in areas both here and overseas which should remain relatively buoyant in spite of the downturn in more traditional mechanical sectors.

Moreover, it has the financial capacity to take advantage of this—gearing at the end of last year improved slightly too and stood at only 15 per cent—with good reason to think that that position has not deteriorated significantly even under the impact of the engineers' strike.

Commercial Union

A pause in US downturn

A relatively strong underwriting performance in the third quarter has left Commercial Union in better shape than some had feared at the nine-month stage. Profits are only a shade down at £59m and on the underwriting front the downswing in the United States cycle seems at least to have paused.

In fact, improvements in workers' compensation and motor business have reduced the United States underwriting deficit of £11.5m revealed at the interim stage to £8.7m. The third-quarter experience, however, would have been just below break-even but for the fact that \$8m of hurricane losses have been absorbed by the extreme weather provision.

Meanwhile, CU's overall underwriting deficit has increased less than £500,000 from the interim stage to £17.6m with cumulative United Kingdom profits slipping a third to £1m and deterioration in the difficult Netherlands market and on the marine front countering improvements in Canada and Australia.

CU now seems to be heading for full-year results of something close to £136m against £142m and the share up 5p to 125p offering a p/e of six and likely yield of almost 11 per cent may seem attractive to those looking to recover on an 18-month view.

However, there is nothing as yet to suggest that the third-quarter United States experience is anything but a welcome pause in the initial stages of a severe cyclical downswing. And in this respect CU still looks rather more vulnerable than the other United States-oriented majors, Royal and General Accident.

At first sight the eight-month figures from W. H. Smith, whose chairman is Mr Peter Bennett (above), make grim reading. At the pre-tax level profits fell by 28 per cent to £2.53m, in spite of a 22 per cent increase in sales to £340m.

The explanations are simple enough: labour problems in the wholesale division which is the mainstay of profits in the opening months; and a £1.5m turnaround in net interest payments, attributable in part to the March acquisition of LCP Homecentres, and in part to the cost of carrying the extra stock which this year's 8 per cent increase in retail space (excluding LCP) requires.

With a six-month contribution of £794,000 pre-tax and pre-interest, the acquisition is evidently not going to cover its costs this year, though Smith claims to be cheerful about its prospects on the strength of its revamping so far.

Profits for the year, however, are going to depend, as always, on trading in the principal chain in the final five months of the year, and experience so far is good enough

Business Diary: Cheque list • Bed and bored

Raymond Seymour, the deputy chairman of Whitbread's, the brewer, had the happy job yesterday of doing out the three £1,500 Whitbread literary awards, the ninth such awards but the first to be free of the tax man's shadow.

This year's winners were Jennifer Johnston for her novel *The Old Jester* (Hamish Hamilton); Penelope Mortimer for her autobiography *About Time* (Allen Lane); and Peter Dickinson for his children's book *Taller* (Gollancz).

In 1974 Andrew Boyle won a prize for *Poor Dear Brendan*, his biography of *Financial Times* founder Brendan Bracken. The Ireland Revenue set up to Boyle and only this year did he win his test case in the courts.

Seymour had another reason for enjoying the job. Many previous winners, he told me, turned out to be test-takers, but from what we could see yesterday all three scribblers were at the neck lotion.

Embarrassment there was none, to be less. One of the judges, John Whitley, reviews editor of *The Sunday Times*, let drop that the publisher of one of the winning books had got to send in a copy to the panel. This I later established was all down to Hamish Hamilton. I was sitting next to their author, Jennifer Johnston, and from her reaction it was clear this was the first she had heard of the matter.

Later, in my own blither, I was sent at last to apologize to the chairman of the Domestic Products Division, and I can assure him in print

with David Holloway, a very pleasant writer.

Holloway was really nice about it and said that Penguin had credited him on the back of one of his own books, *Augustus John*, as the author of *Gustav Mahler*, and the *Course to Bo*—which happens to be one of Holloway's.

Holloway, who is just rounding off the research for his definitive biography of Shaw (George Bernard, that is), told me he had written in Holloway suggesting that they set up a charity with themselves as sole beneficiaries of donations made by people who mixed them up.

I suggested that the charity should be called Brookford, which Holloway said would do fine. I consider my debt to him discharged.

James Seacombe, 52, the former chairman of Slumberland and the son of its founder, has surprised the bedding industry: he left two years ago by returning with a new company, James Seacombe Ltd, and a range of beds incorporating new sleep-tec technology.

He received two awards at

yesterday's opening of the International Furniture Exhibition at the NEC, Birmingham.

One is the National Association of Retailers' Publishers' much-coveted blue ribbon for the outstanding exhibitor.

Seacombe told *Business*

Diary: "We sold Slumberland in 1969

and I joined them as a main board director and chief executive.

The result is a slab of foam

drilled with holes to a pattern

which provides "give" for the hips and shoulders, and sup-

port for the rest of the body.

He has replaced the traditional wood or metal frame with an injection-moulded plastic

structure incorporating huge

underbed drawers, and

headboards and bedside

tables can be hung.

Seacombe has taken over a

new factory at Redditch, Wor-

cestershire. Buyers from the

big stores have had previews

and the orders are already

coming in. None has been

received from El yet.

While National Enterprise

Board members in London

concerned

letters of resignation, as Sir

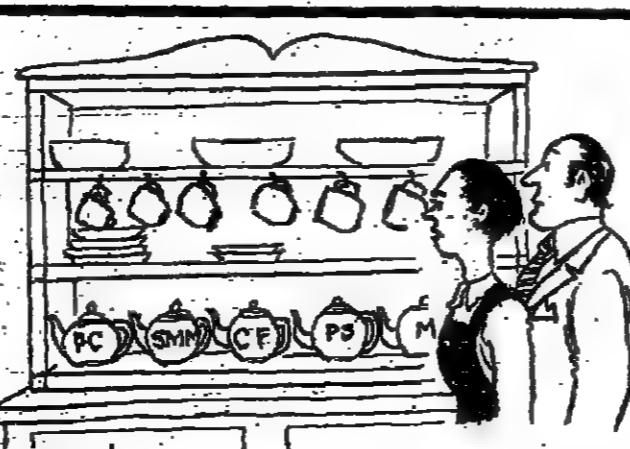
Keith Joseph, the Industry

Secretary, pondered the future

of the NED and Rolls-Royce, new

recruits are signing up.

Despite the scathing com-



PC means prescription charges, SMM school meals and milk, CF children's fares, PS postage stamps and M miscellaneous increases.

through and through so I quit to do the thing I do best — produce and sell beds."

In his view, there's been nothing new in beds for so long that the market has become sleepy. "It is crying out for something exciting and because I did not have costly traditional machinery to take into my calculations I was able to look at entirely new techniques."

The result is a slab of foam

drilled with holes to a pattern

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ments will overwhelmingly be restricted to replacement of equipment rendered obsolete or simply worn out during the years of sanctions.

Manufacturing industry, despite a gloomy start to the year, had by the end of August, returned to levels of production, measured in volume terms, that it had last enjoyed before the economy as a whole went into a deep recession in 1975. Mining appears likely to earn £200m this year—a record.

At this rate, Britain's

import controls will

be retained in some

shape or form, however,

the volume of orders

coming in from Zimbabwe Rhodesia and

outside suppliers can still be

expected to grow considerably and

it is here that Britain, having

been faced with the

task of regaining the

position it enjoyed

in Zimbabwe

Rhodesia's

trade in 1965

was

achieved by buying what is

perceived to be the most suit-

able product. At the country's

biggest bank, the Standard

Bank, in a recent review of

the economy, "Since 1965

Britain has become increas-

ingly uncompetitive in world

markets on price, quality and

delivery date considerations".

These responsible for invest-

ment decisions in both the pri-

ate and public sectors make no

secret of the fact that Britain

has no hope of regaining the

position it enjoyed when the last

details of Zimbabwe Rhodesia's

external trade were published in

1965.

At that time Britain was the

country's principal trading part-

ner by far, providing 30 per

cent of its imports and taking 22 per

cent of its exports. This position

LET THE GIN BE HIGH & DRY!

Stock Exchange Prices

Technical rally

ACCOUNT DAYS : Dealings Began, Nov 5. Dealings End, Nov 16. \$ Contango Day, Nov 19. Settlement Day, Nov 26
6. Forward bargains are not settled on two previous days

§ Forward bargains are permitted on two previous days

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LET US INSURE you following after the things which make for peace, things wherein all may enjoy mutual content. —*Proverbs 14: 14*

BIRTHS

BATCHELOR—On January 18, 1979, in Leyton, wife of Christopher and son (Nicholas) Peter Denzel.

CARTER—On Oct. 22, to Roger, 27, and Vicki, 25, Timothy Carter, of Lewisham, London, son (Nicholas) Karen.

CHATE—On Nov. 19, 1979, to G. and Mrs. John Chate, son (Nicholas) (Anastasia) and daughter (Alexander) (Alessandra).

CRAWFORD—On 7 July, 1979, to G. and Mrs. Edward Harry, son (Nicholas) (Anastasia) and daughter (Alexander) (Alessandra).

CHESTER—On Oct. 20, to G. and Mrs. John Chester, son (Nicholas) (Anastasia) and daughter (Alexander) (Alessandra).

DODS—On November 7, 1979, to Prunella, 26, and Philip, 27, son (Nicholas) (Anastasia).

EDWARDS—To John and Rosalind, 26, son (Nicholas) (Anastasia) and daughter (Alexander) (Alessandra).

FORGAGE—On September 7th, 1979, to G. and Mrs. John Forrage, son (Nicholas) (Anastasia) and daughter (Alexander) (Alessandra).

GARRETT—On November 19, 1979, to G. and Mrs. John Garrett, son (Nicholas) (Anastasia) and daughter (Alexander) (Alessandra).

GRIMES—On November 19, 1979, to G. and Mrs. John Grim, son (Nicholas) (Anastasia) and daughter (Alexander) (Alessandra).

HARVEY—On November 19, 1979, to G. and Mrs. John Harvey, son (Nicholas) (Anastasia) and daughter (Alexander) (Alessandra).

HOBSON—On November 19, 1979, to G. and Mrs. John Hobson, son (Nicholas) (Anastasia) and daughter (Alexander) (Alessandra).

JONES—On November 19, 1979, to G. and Mrs. John Jones, son (Nicholas) (Anastasia) and daughter (Alexander) (Alessandra).

KELLY—On November 19, 1979, to G. and Mrs. John Kelly, son (Nicholas) (Anastasia) and daughter (Alexander) (Alessandra).

LEWIS—On November 19, 1979, to G. and Mrs. John Lewis, son (Nicholas) (Anastasia) and daughter (Alexander) (Alessandra).

MCINTYRE—On November 19, 1979, to G. and Mrs. John McIntyre, son (Nicholas) (Anastasia) and daughter (Alexander) (Alessandra).

MORRISON—On November 19, 1979, to G. and Mrs. John Morrison, son (Nicholas) (Anastasia) and daughter (Alexander) (Alessandra).

REED—On November 19, 1979, to G. and Mrs. John Reed, son (Nicholas) (Anastasia) and daughter (Alexander) (Alessandra).

ROBERTSON—On November 19, 1979, to G. and Mrs. John Robertson, son (Nicholas) (Anastasia) and daughter (Alexander) (Alessandra).

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